
AUTHOR Wang JiaKun

TITLE OF THESIS Incorporating Cultural Value Into A Service Brand- Strategic Branding For ALV

DEPARTMENT Design

DEGREE PROGRAMME Masters In International Design Business Management

YEAR 2015

NUMBER OF PAGES 130

LANGUAGE English

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a strategic branding project of Active Life Village OY (ALV), a Finnish elderly-care service start-up. In Finland, waves of retirees, known as the post-WWII baby boomers, burst the once-solid public elderly care sector, which reveals opportunities for the private elderly-care service providers like ALV. Finnish baby boomers, as a crossroads and bridging generation (Karisto, 2007), differ from previous generations. Hence, their distinctive value requires ALV outlining tailored strategies to accommodate this emerging target group.

This brand research attempts a new approach, Service Driven Cultural Innovation (SDCI), adapted from Cultural branding approach (Holt, 2004) in Service brand logic ((Merz et al., 2009). A literature review is presented to link the Cultural approach to service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2004b, 2008), which provides an initial methodology of SDCI that encourage cultural innovations through collective identity project of consumers in a co-created cultural context of the service system of a brand. The strategic branding research of ALV is then structured in according to the Design Research methodology (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009) to further demonstrate and validate this SDCI approach in terms of the procedures, corresponding methods and key insights gained from each stage. Firstly, a phenomenological inquiry, through identity project interview (Holt & Thompson, 2004) assisted by image probing technique, brings out Finnish boomers' distinct cultural insights about their impending elderly life. Then, a co-design workshop, in the fashion of a World café, was organized to transmute these insights into service-based brand strategies in a collaborative manner. Finally, the design process and outcomes were evaluated, with data collected according to Kirkpatrick model (Kirkpatrick, 1959), which provides an initial validation of the SDCI approach.

Overall, the results and findings of this design research suggest that ALV should propose new service system that incorporates the cultural context in which boomers, by practicing collective identity project, actively adapt to the bodily and mental changes while aging. More specifically, this service system should feed boomers' cultural aspiration by reinventing elder life from three aspects- 'aging in balance', 'relationship and home', and 'passion to serve'. The ALV service-branding project resulted in achievable and comprehensive service concepts, which are highly appreciated by the client and has been adopted for their future business development plan. Consequentially, SDCI approach proves to be applicable to service companies, especially small ones with limited resources like ALV. In addition, this thesis provides brand practitioners, especially service designers, instruments to elicit holistic cultural insights from a particular cultural group and translate the insights into service opportunities that co-create brand value with target consumers. Moreover, this thesis stressed the important role of service designer in the brand development and innovation, which may also suggest new career paths for service designer to follow.

KEYWORDS Service Brand, Cultural Branding, Context Mapping, Service Driven Cultural Innovation

INCORPORATING CULTURAL VALUE INTO A SERVICE BRAND- STRATEGIC BRANDING FOR ALV

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. THE AGING BOOM IN FINLAND	2
1.2. BRAND HISTORY OF ALV	4
1.3. THE STRUGGLES OF ALV	6
1.4. RESEARCH OVERVIEW	7
1.4.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS	7
1.4.2. THESIS STRUCTURE	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1. MINDSHARE BRANDING	13
2.1.1. BRAND COMPONENTS:	14
2.1.2. BRAND MANAGEMENT:	14
2.1.3. BRAND COMMUNICATIONS:	15
2.1.4. ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES:	15
2.2. CULTURAL BRANDING	16
2.2.1. BRAND COMPONENTS:	16
2.2.2. BRAND COMMUNICATION:	18
2.2.3. BRAND MANAGEMENT:	19
2.2.4. ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS:	20
2.3. SCOPING A BRANDING MODEL FOR ALV	22
2.3.1. EVOLVING CULTURAL APPROACH- BRAND AS CITIZEN ARTIST	22
2.3.2. EMBRACING THE SERVICE BRAND LOGIC-BRAND AS SERVICE	24
2.4. SERVICE-DOMINANT LOGIC AND BRAND VALUE CREATION	25
2.4.1. VALUE IS EXCHANGED THROUGH SERVICE	25
2.4.2. VALUE IS CO-CREATED	26
2.4.3. CO-CREATION SHAPES SERVICE ECOSYSTEM	26
2.4.4. VALUE IS PERCEIVED IN THE CONTEXT	28
2.5. SDCI - A SERVICE-LOGIC ADAPTED CULTURAL APPROACH	30
2.6. THE METHODOLOGY OF ALV'S BRANDING RESEARCH IN SDCI APPROACH	32
DESCRIPTIVE STUDY I	35
3.1. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INQUIRY	37
3.2. FIRST STUDY PHASE-SCOPE RECRUITMENT:	39
3.3. SECOND STUDY PHASE-DATA COLLECTION	41
3.4. THIRD STUDY PHASE DATA ANALYSIS	44
3.5. THE POPULIST ETHOS-SELF REINVENTION	53
3.5.1. CULTURE CODES 1-EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN	53
3.5.2. CULTURE CODES 2-BREAK THE ROUTINE	54
3.5.3. CULTURE CODES 3-VALUING THE DIVERSITY	55
3.5.4. POTENTIALS OF INCORPORATING SELF REINVENTION IN ALV'S BRAND	56
3.6. AGING IN BALANCE-RECONSTRUCT THE AGING STATUS	58
3.6.1. CULTURE CONTRADICTION-LOSING THE VIGOR AND VITALITY	58
3.6.2. NEW IDEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITY-AGING IN BALANCE	59

3.6.3.	CULTURE CODES1-BALANCE THE DISCIPLINE WITH REWARDS	60
3.6.4.	CULTURAL CODES2-RESET THE BALANCE BETWEEN BODY AND MIND	61
3.6.5.	POTENTIALS OF INCORPORATING AGING IN BALANCE INTO ALV'S BRAND	63
3.7.	RELATIONSHIP AND HOME-RECONSTRUCT THE RELATIONSHIP	64
3.7.1.	CULTURAL CONTRADICTION 1-LOSING SOCIAL TIES	64
3.7.2.	CULTURAL CONTRADICTION 2-WAVING GOODBYE TO THEIR KIDS	65
3.7.3.	IDEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITY –RELATIONSHIP AND HOME	66
3.7.4.	CULTURAL CODES1-VALUE THE DEEP RELATIONSHIP	66
3.7.5.	CULTURAL CODES 2-LOOKING FOR NEW TRIBES	66
3.7.6.	CULTURAL CODES3-CULTIVATE AND NURTURE	67
3.7.7.	POTENTIALS OF INCORPORATE <i>RELATIONSHIP AND HOME</i> INTO ALV'S BRAND	68
3.8.	PASSION TO SERVE-RECONSTRUCT THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE	69
3.8.1.	CULTURE CONTRADICTION – LOSE THE JOB AS LOSE THE IDENTITY	69
3.8.2.	IDEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES–PASSION TO SERVE	70
3.8.3.	CULTURE CODES 1-OPTIMIZE THE EXPERTISE	70
3.8.4.	CULTURE CODES 2-INSPIRE THE YOUTH	71
3.8.5.	CULTURE CODES 3-BE A PART OF THE CHANGES	71
3.8.6.	CULTURAL CODES4- FIND A JOB THAT I ENJOY	71
3.8.7.	POTENTIALS OF INCORPORATING PASSION TO SERVE INTO ALV'S BRAND:	72
PRESCRIPTIVE STUDY		75
4.1.	OVERVIEW OF CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP	76
4.2.	FIRST STUDY PHASE-WORKSHOP PREPARATION:	77
4.2.1.	SETTING THE AMBIANCE	77
4.2.2.	PLANNING THE TOPICS	78
4.2.3.	OUTCOME OF WORKSHOP PREPARATION	78
4.3.	SECOND STUDY PHASE-CONTEXT IMMERSION:	84
4.3.1.	CONCEPT IDEATION	84
4.3.2.	CONCEPT EVALUATION	87
4.3.3.	SCENARIO PROJECTION	88
4.3.4.	OUTCOME OF CONTEXT IMMERSION	89
4.4.	THIRD STUDY PHASE-TACTICAL IMPLICATION	91
4.4.1.	OUTCOME OF TACTICAL IMPLICATION	97
DESCRIPTIVE STUDY II		99
5.1.	OVERVIEW OF PROJECT EVALUATION	100
5.2.	REFLECTIONS ON THE CULTURE INQUIRY	102
5.2.1.	DELICATE CONTROL OF THE ELICITATION	102
5.2.2.	RHYTHM OF THE CONVERSATION	102
5.3.	REFLECTIONS ON THE CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP	103
5.3.1.	EMPHATIC UNDERSTANDING	103
5.3.2.	CO-CREATION MINDSET	103
5.3.3.	CONCERNS OF THE WORKSHOP	105
5.4.	REFLECTIONS ON ALV'S BRAND TRANSITION	106

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK	109
6.1. RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW	110
6.2. APPLICABILITY OF THE SDCI APPROACH	112
6.3. IMPLICATION GUILD OF SDCI APPROACH	113
REFERENCE	117
APPENDIX	125
8.1. APPENDIX A- REQUEST OF IMAGE COLLECTION FOR THE INFORMANTS	126
8.2. APPENDIX B- CLUSTERS OF IDENTITY-BUILDING PRACTICES OF INFORMANTS	127

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The aging boom in Finland

Since 2007, Finland's population is aging into retirement far more quickly, and approximately fifteen years earlier than the populations of most other European countries (Piekkola, 2004; Nieminen, 2007). In the coming years, the impact of Finland's aging population will become more noticeable. According to the research of Mamolo and Scherbov (2009), while populations across Europe are aging, Finland will be the one of the first European countries to realize the costs of its rapid aging in terms of overwhelming welfare burdens (Figure 1.1).

	Old-age dependency ratio, 2007 (%)		Projected old-age dependency ratio, 2030 (%)
Italy	30.2	Germany	47.8
Germany	29.9	Italy	46.3
Greece	27.6	Finland	45.4
Sweden	26.4	Switzerland	42.7
Belgium	25.9	Slovenia	42.0

Chart 1.1 Top 5 European countries with the highest Old-age dependency ratio (%) in 2007 and 2030. (The old-age dependency ratio measures the level of support provided to the elderly based on the working-age population).

(Source: Mamolo & Scherbov, 2009)

Finland's current elderly care system was established thanks to the demographic dividend – the 10 years population boom after WWII. The boomer generation provided Finland with an economic boost that has supported a robust welfare system for decades. However, as the country's fertility rate has lagged its reproduction rate for nearly 30 years, Finland is falling short of a sustainable labor force that can pay for its current welfare system (Figure 1.2). Understandably, many boomers grew up expecting that their government would support their retirement as well as it has supported their parents' retirement. Due to the ongoing aging boom, boomers who will soon retire (especially the so-called 'trailing boomers' born between 1956 and 1965) do not seem prepared for a retirement that will likely be quite different from what their parents enjoyed.

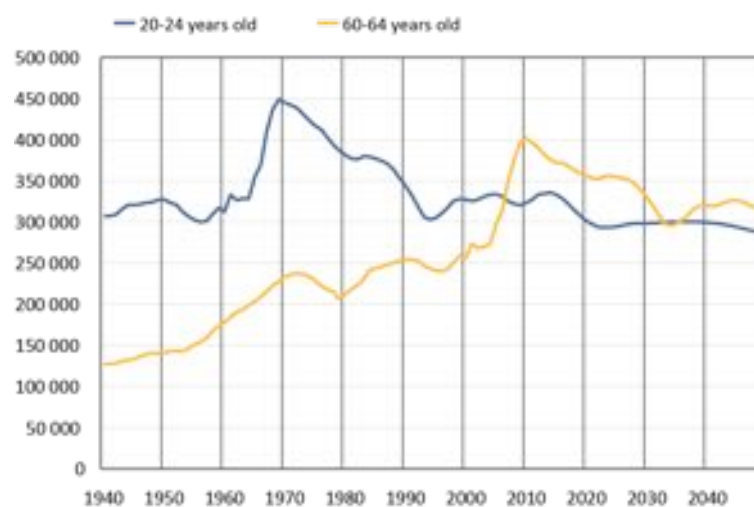


Figure 1.1 Entry into and exit from the labor market in Finland, 1940-2040. (Source: Statistics Finland, 2010)

Since 2009, a growing number of Finnish baby-boomers have been withdrawing money from Finland's old-age pension pool (Helsingin Sanomat, 2010). Waves of baby-boomer workers retire every day in Finland, and many of them will likely live at least 15 years past their retirement dates (Saari, 2013). Finland's projected 'old-age dependency ratio' seems likely to increase for the next 20 years until the number of retiring workers begins to decrease around 2035 (Figure 1.3). As the International Monetary Fund warned in 2012, Finland is not ready to meet the demands of its aging boom 'while ensuring its long-term fiscal sustainability' (Mann, 2012). According to reports published in 2014 by Finland's Government Budget Proposal and National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland's expenditures for Affairs and Health (social welfare) is not matching the pace of population aging. Under these circumstances, the Finnish elderly-care system may soon run short on resources.

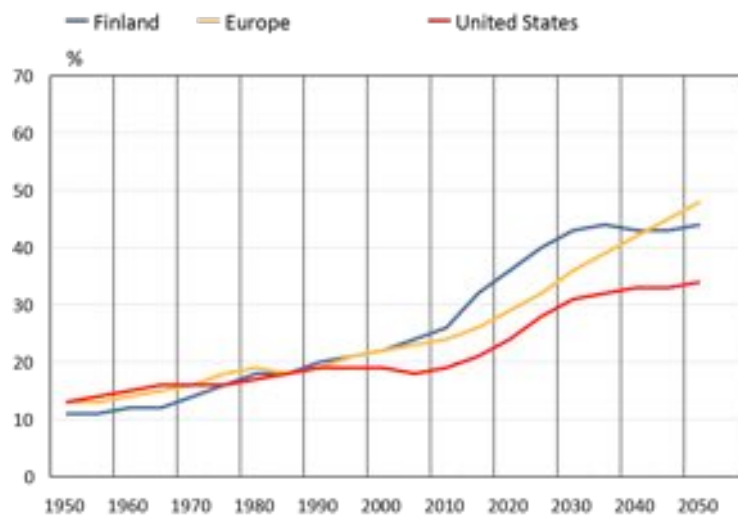


Figure 1.2 The projection of old-age dependency ratios in Europe, the US and Finland, 1950 to 2050

(Source: The United Nations, Department of Economic and social affairs, 2012)

In order to mitigate this impending crisis, Finland began in about 2004 to put policies in place designed to promote a new elderly-care mindset: 'Active Aging' (Piekkola, 2004). WHO originally broached this concept in 2002. Active aging energizes the capacity of physical, social, and mental wellbeing throughout different life stages and enables citizens with sufficient protection, security and care, so as to encourage their active participation in social activity (WHO, 2002).

1.2. Brand history of ALV

In 2012, the European year for Active Aging, Finnish authorities raised the topic again, hoping to arouse innovations that would encourage its seniors to live in a healthy and independent condition as long as possible. However, the Finnish government faces challenges as it attempts to transform the entrenched model of reactive elderly care to a new cultural mindset that practices proactive aging care. Many efforts have been devoted to this transition with, thus far, little result. Many startups still cling to the senior-aid technology niche, which leans heavily on the traditional elderly-care infrastructure. Consequentially, these companies found it increasingly difficult to expend its business with the current (service) product offerings, and Active Life Village (ALV) is not an exception.

The origins of Active Life Village (ALV) can be found in a unit called Well-Life Center (WLC), which functioned in the same location within the Laurea University of Applied sciences starting in 2004. In the spring of 2008, several Finnish universities, the City of Espoo and Bonavita Oy established a company called Well Life Center Oy. The purpose was to continue development of Laurea University's WLC concept where research, development, public and educational services, and various private companies collaborated under the same roof. Well Life Center was located in the city of Espoo and hosted a Senior Center that provided counseling to senior citizens. During 2009 and 2010, the company started a number of wellbeing business initiatives such as 'Active Life Home' that emphasized developing the future infrastructure of 'senior friendly neighborhoods'. In 2012, WLC reached key milestones in designing the concept of home-care infrastructure. Once several research results were ready for a commercial launch, WLC searched for parties that would continue the operations of ALV on a commercial basis. At the end of 2012, a group of suitable private investors were found, and shares of WLC were sold to these new owners.

The ALV brand-strategy-planning project began in June 2013, and ALV has been commercially operated since early 2014. The ALV brand name remains the same, but its business practices and brand value have changed since it became a commercial venture. These changes have moved ALV further towards product-orientation from its product-orientation human-centric nature. These changes in ALV's brand vision, mission, and customer value propositions are listed below (ALV investment report, 2012):

BEFORE COMMERCIALIZATION	AFTER COMMERCIALIZATION
VISION	
Companies work in genuine collaboration with different types of experts and researchers in the unique environment of ALV to promote the creation and commercialization of competitive innovations together with end users.	Active Life Village Ltd. seeks to provide innovative elderly care services, solutions and technologies for the aging population in selected markets.
MISSIONS	
Innovations developed at Active Life Village are aimed at promoting people's wellbeing and encouraging people to take responsibility for their own welfare. With the support of partners, they are further developed into cost-effective solutions beneficial for the	The goal of ALV is to help people manage their wellbeing information and data. Due to economic crises and an uncertain future of the 'welfare state,' ALV believes it is critical that people own their wellbeing and health data and actively manage and

whole society. Solutions developed establish a foundation for business operations and service systems.

store it so that it can be distributed to caring organizations.

TARGET CUSTOMER

Providing supports for SMEs, helping them to develop products and services together with their users.

Co-operation with SMEs in the area of internationalization and feasible possibilities and challenges for these kinds of services and operational models.

Service Providers, both Home-care and Care Home operators, are the main customers of Active Life Village Ltd.

In some cases, ALV sells selected devices directly to consumers (Customer/Senior Citizens).

CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION

- Support to SMEs with different development and user-centric Living Lab projects
- Research services, expertise and experience. This includes a wide set of both development and testing services
- Testing environments
- Access and contacts to end users and different user communities
- Market information and analysis for both Finnish and international markets
- Consultation and tools for innovation, product and service development, and also for market adaptations
- Contacts for other supporting organizations, research institutes, etc.
- Help in finding the right contacts and building networks, both in Finland and internationally
- The ecosystem also hosts many international visits and seminars, which provide visibility and networking possibilities to SMEs.

- ALV value proposition to Senior Citizens / Consumers is:
- Living a satisfying life as long as possible (either at home or in a care home)
- Managing their own wellbeing
- ALV value proposition for Service Providers (Home-care and Care Home operators) is:
- Right level of care based on customer's needs
- Bridging the gap between needed staff and the growing population of aging people
- Care service design complemented with ICT solutions
- ALV value proposition for Technology Providers is
- Access to larger addressable market
- Market specific expertise and presence

Chart 1.2 Changes in ALV's brand vision, mission, and customer value propositions after commercialization
(Source: ALV investment report, 2012)

In June 2013, at my very first interview of ALV, one of their senior executive stated that, after commercialization, ALV has been operated according to a three-phase business roadmap:

The natural starting point for Active Life Village Ltd in its business was the **System Selling** business model. Using this model, ALV sold Consultation, Training, and System integration services, as well as a Total Solution, to **elderly-care service providers**. The solutions were composed of third-party vendors' products that ALV has integrated into the ALV concept. The company's networks have helped ALV develop needed competencies and a business network for this approach.

After achieved a solid customer base in the public sector, ALV has started to realize its mid-term objective by deploy a **Service Selling** business model. With this model, ALV was selling Self-developed ICT operational services to elderly-care venders, instead of solely integrating third-party solutions or products.

ALV has a long-term goal of selling **Consumer Services** to the consumer market. Selling Consumer Services requires both the proper legal filings. It will only be successful if the ALV brand becomes well known in the consumer market. So far, ALV haven't yet fully prepared for serving individual consumers yet.

1.3. The struggles of ALV

As indicated in the previous sections, ALV is turning its character from an incubator of technological innovation into private holding company of merchandising business. This commercialization unavoidably changes the brand, which moved the brand from the initial 'System selling' model to the second phase 'Service selling' model. However, it has not naturally led ALV to a promising position in the market. Realizing that opportunities of selling its ICT system in the public sector are shrinking, ALV knows they need to move on faster to the further phase of its roadmap, 'Consumer Service' model and exploit the consumer market. However, so far, ALV is just converting its original solutions directly into mass-market consumer goods, despite the fact that these solutions—remote monitoring system for retirement homes—do not fit in with the domestic life context. Therefore, in spite of the dire need for innovation in elderly-care in Finland, ALV has not been able to expand its business and currently is struggling to survive. From my point of view, ALV's struggle was meanly cause by two mated issues – misplaced brand position and technique-driven innovation approach.



Figure 1.3 The service brochure of Active life Home (Source: ALV)

Firstly, ALV's current offering was merely an expedient resolving measure to the impending elderly-care challenges. As a result, the brand image of ALV appeared quite far from the concept of 'active aging'. Its brand position was rather misplaced due to the embedded stereotype of typical elderly from decades ago. Furthermore, its brand communication seems to remind the average consumer of the stereotypical lonely, dependent, and vulnerable later life (See figure 1.4).

Secondly, ALV's innovation approach seems to have low relevance about gaining consumer insights but is rather purely technique driven. The core of this approach was testing the integrated technological solution with the senior citizens through integrated prototype—'loan BOX' (see figure 1.5). But the feedbacks from users were only about tactical improvement of the old system. That resulted in the ICT integration solution, with no contextual understanding of the reality, still rooted upon the assumptions of elderly-care needs in retirement home.



Figure 1.4 The 'Loan box' prototype of Active life village (Source: ALV)

1.4. Research overview

Thus, in order to actually get out of its struggle, ALV demand a strategic brand transformation. To help ALV to achieve this goal, I plan to conduct my research with two objectives.

Firstly, this research helps ALV to re-imagine the brand value beyond their technologies and products it currently represents. I take a human-centric design perspective in defining the brand position and value proposition of ALV. More specifically, now that boomer retirees are rapidly springing up, the aging of this generation reveals a great market potential. Thus, ALV should gain a genuine understanding of how to shape their brand to embrace the aging baby boomers.

Secondly, this research investigates an appropriate innovation approach for rebranding ALV. ALV's current innovation approach, driven by technological breakthrough and user testing, is not sufficient to achieve the first objective. A more holistic and much deeper consumer insights should be incorporate into the technology-driven approach leading the (service) product development of ALV. In such way, a methodological exploration is carried out throughout the design process.

1.4.1. Research objectives and questions

To enhance the feasibility of this project-based thesis, the two research objectives are further detailed into three constituent clusters of research questions:

- How should ALV transform its brand to accommodate Finnish boomers?
- How should ALV examine the market opportunities from Finnish boomers?
- How should ALV implement the research outcomes to guild its innovation?

1.4.2. Thesis structure

This thesis consists of three components, which are literature review, design research, and discussion. Through the comprehensive studies that constitute each component, I strived to answer the three research questions of the thesis.

Literature review

Firstly, to answer the primary research question, the literature review is carried out with the purpose of propose a appropriate branding and innovation approach that adapts to the circumstances of ALV's brand transformation. This study first summarizes branding theories and brand management models relevant to the challenges of ALV rebranding. In this study, my theoretical exploration is inspired from the known brand scholar and practitioner—Douglas B Holt. Through the comparison, follow the argument of Holt (2004), between two brand management models, Mindshare approach and Cultural approach, I strive to explain the rationality of use Cultural approach to alter Mindshare approach that ALV currently adopted. This advocacy comes with a deep concern about the necessary adaptation of Cultural approach to fit ALV's circumstances. Following the work of Merz et al. (2009), this concern leads to a further methodological exploration of integration of Cultural approach and Service brand logic (Merz et al., 2009). Applying the ideas of Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2004b, 2008), I delineate their foundational Service Dominant logic, which complements Citizen Artist logic (Holt, 2002), a further evolution of myth-driven Cultural approach, with a service mindset of value co-creation. To conclude this methodological exploration, I discuss the fundamental premises of my integrated branding approach, namely Service-driven Cultural Innovation (SDCI). In addition, this study results with the methodological deployment of the design studies constitutes the strategic branding research of ALV.

Design research

Secondly, to answer the rest supplementary research questions, a three-phase design research has been conducted. This design research exemplifies the research and implication of ALV's strategic branding case, which is carried out from the SDCI approach. This design research takes a research-through-design manner, which sees the design process as means to examine the hypothetical SDCI branding approach. As a hybrid design student in IDBM, I strive to merge my business and design knowledge in this thesis. In such way, this research is not only an exploration of the appropriate branding practice for ALV, but also a search of the new position of hybrid designer in strategic branding territory. I explore the possibility of service design thinking in terms of translate the value proposition defined in human-centric manner. Due to the explorative and constrictive nature of this research, it is crucial to deploy the design process in a systematic manner that supports the further evaluation. Thus, this design research consists of three sequential stages, Descriptive Study I, Prescriptive Study, and Descriptive Study II, which are employed logically, according to the DRM methodology (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009). Following the DRM methodology, the purpose and result of each reach stages become complementary, which details the implication of SDCI approach and offer evidence to the evaluation accordingly.

The first Descriptive Study is a cultural inquiry that studies the cultural context of the Finnish boomers from the phenomenological approach that, with identity project interview (Holt & Thompson, 2004) assisted by image probing technique, coherent with the SDCI approach. This study developed ALV's understanding to the situation of aging boomers, which suggests ideological opportunities for ALV to construct service context accommodating the collective identity projects of aging boomers. Meanwhile, I gained empirical experiences though testing potential processes and methods, for brand research, that went along with the hypothetical SDCI approach.

The Prescriptive Study presents a co-design procedure, which demonstrates the practicality of turning research insights into service concepts that engages boomers to co-create brand-value with ALV. This study develops, through the World café workshop, potential path for the brand renewal of ALV. In this workshop, a group of design students transmuted the understanding I gained from cultural inquiry into service concept together with ALV. In addition, this workshop offered the reflective experience that cast impact on the executives of ALV

The second Descriptive Study is a project evaluation that presents the reflection of the prior process of the design research carried out along with the strategic branding project of ALV. This reflection are based on my empirical experience as well as the feedbacks that I collect, following the Kirkpatrick Model (Kirkpatrick, 1959), from the informants, workshop participants and ALV's executives. All these empirical data support my answer to the two supplementary research questions, which also reinforce my hypothesis of the primary question. Hence, the SDCI approach has gained enough evidence to prove its value in the brand transformation of ALV.

Conclusion and outlook

Finally, at the end of the thesis, I conclude the thesis through an open-ended discussion that articulates my perspective on the practical implications of the key findings in design and management field. It first summarizes my research of the brand transformation strategy for ALV. In addition, I elaborate the limitations of this brand transformation research and the suggestions of future studies. Furthermore, it suggests broader implementation of the SDCI approach that has been established through the prior studies.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brands' ancient root, the ironed mark defines ownership, has influenced branding research for centuries. Seeing the primary goal of branding as identify ownership of customer loyalty, the emphasis of modern branding has been addressed on authorizing consumer through effective communications. Therefore, following the conclusion from Holt (2002), models drawn from psychology and social communication have dominated modern brand research. The research on maintaining the consumer loyalty has been primarily about managing the media to aligning consumers' minds. This brand management approach is known as Mindshare model (Holt, 2004).

In the late 20th century, the development of the cultural consumption theory (McCracken, 1988) has shift the focus of market study to the consumer culture. Holt is one of the initiator who researches this paradigm shift with the emphasis on branding. Holt's theoretical convergent is condensed in two books: *How Brands Become Icons* (2004), and *Cultural Strategy* (2010) with Cameron. In *How Brands Become Icons*, Holt challenged three existing brand management model known as mind-share, emotional and viral branding. Holt (2004) majorly attacked the dominative Mindshare branding, the genesis of the psychological approach, by proposing a new model based on cultural consumption theory. Holt suggests branding research should break the stereotypes that consider customers to be rational agents sharing consistent cognitive model. Instead, Holt (2002, 2004) advocates that a brand should resonate with the evolvement of consumer culture so as to have its leverage. More specifically, Holt's new model has drawn upon the socio-cultural mechanism behind the most iconic American brands of the past decades. Through these comprehensive case studies, Holt (2004) grounded the successful customer engagement of those iconic brands upon their opportune and precise cultural expressions. These expressions resonant the cultural consumption needs of specific target customer in particular period of time. He suggest brand should evolve along with the societal changes throughout the history, which is a better way to gain brand authority, instead of maintain the consistent image that tie up to abstract consumer cognitive model. Later, in his 2010 work, *Cultural Strategy*, Holt and Cameron further explained how to apply Cultural approach to create ideology innovations (i.e., cultural innovation) that build breakthrough brands.

	<i>Mindshare branding</i>	<i>Cultural branding</i>
	Abstract associations	Cultural expressions
Brand Components	The brand consists of a set of associations that are the brand's purified essence (brand DNA)	The brand's value is found in the cultural contents of the brand's myth. The brand has a reputation for performing certain myths
Brand Management	<i>Consistency</i> Brand management is about up-holding consistency in communications over time	<i>Historical fit</i> Brand management is about adapting the brand's myth to cultural changes in order to remain relevant
	Persuasion	Myth-making
Brand Communication	The purpose of advertising is to influence consumer perception of the brand through rhetoric	Communication is the center of consumer value. The brand is a 'storied' product, and the product is merely a means to embrace the story

Chart 2.1 A comparison between the Mindshare branding model and the Cultural branding model

(Source: Adapted from Holt, 2004).

According to its investment report (ALV, 2012), ALV currently employs Mindshare branding as their brand management model. Moving away from its customer-orientation nature, Mindshare model results in the product-oriented commercialization of ALV. This product orientation has led ALV into a deadened innovation approach that drives them away from their potential customers. The following section compares Mindshare approach to Cultural approach (see figure 2.1), and considers the advantages and challenges ALV would encounter if it adopted Holt's Cultural approach.

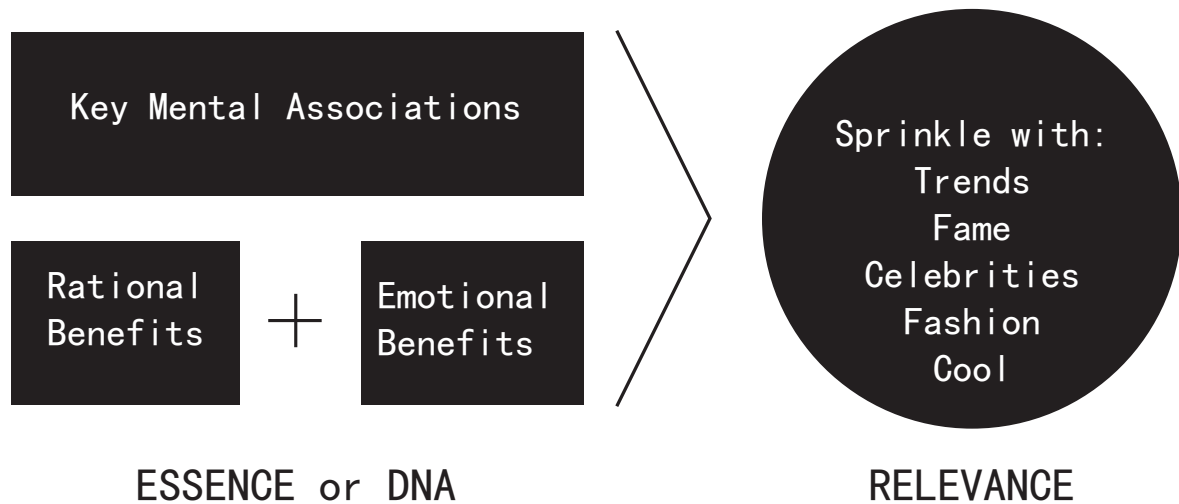
2.1. Mindshare branding

Despite the existence of a number of different legends, the most received modern interpretation of the word 'brand' comes from its ancient meaning: 'an identifying mark made by a hot iron'. Accordingly, 'Branding' originates from this practice of marking identifying symbols on private possession. Only till early 19th century, the term 'brand' then broadened to mean a particular identification of goods. Looking back to the origin and early evolution of brand, it is not hard to realize that using symbols to indicate ownership is almost like an instinctive human behavior. Following the ideas of Merz et al. (2009), I found the Mindshare approach is largely restricted in the service business of ALV due to its predetermination of ownership that divided the role of consumers and manufacturer. This argument develops further in the remainder of the section.

As Merz et al. (2009) stated in their journal paper, during the first industrial revolution, immature markets often caused resources to be unequally distributed, which in turn caused both manufacturers and consumers to feel discriminated against. Customers came to feel that companies that consistently provided products created value simply by virtue of their mass distribution of goods with consistent quality. Therefore, at that time, building on the work of Copeland (1923), Merz et al. (2009) found that product branding has often suggested that the constant availability of a consumer good is a value in and of itself. As Merz et al. (2009) addressed, the discrimination in distribution system, between consumers and manufacturers, ultimately urged most manufacturers to seize ownership of brands, and use them to attract replicative parchments and raise the bargaining power in the immature market. Reflecting on a series of branding theory (Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry, 1989; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Thompson, Pollio & Locander, 1994), Merz et al. (2009) further argued that consumers are persuaded to become the loyal customers of the offerings authorized by specific brands until another company arises with new offerings that arouse customers' new needs. To the end of 20th century, this notion of branding, consumers are manageable assets of the manufacturer (Farquhar, 1994), remains an essential approach in evaluating brand value. To sum up, in order to sustain brand loyalty, Mindshare brands manage customers by clear segmentation and embed abstract value associations into consumers' minds through the consumptions of their product offerings.

2.1.1. Brand components:

As discussed above, Mindshare models regard brand as a company's ownership of abstract values in consumers' mind. Through the lens of psychological logic, the branding practice becomes a kind of 'psychological suggestion.'



Figures 2.1 Mindshare strategy Theoretical Model (Source: adapted from Holt & Cameron, 2010)

"Mindshare assumes that brands exist outside of history, as transcendental entities." (Holt, 2004, p.37). Viewed in this light, as Holt (2004) noted, Mindshare approach considers that what consumers need from a brand is durable and universal. Hence, in order to sustain and grow customer assets, a company needs to keep embedding new benefits into their market offerings to shape and drive new customer needs. Thus, Holt (2004) suggests that, for the purpose of make efficient management practice in global market expansion, Mindshare cuts out the "ambiguous details" of the real socio-cultural context in which most consumers' lives. Hence, as figure 2.1 indicates, in Mindshare approach, brand research typically produces only a set of highly generic value propositions (i.e., a sets of functional and emotional benefits), known as brand DNAs. According to brand DNAs, functional benefits are comprised into branded product offerings. Accordingly, emotional benefits are transferred into persuasive arguments, which periodically inject associations into the consumer's mind in different market segments through mass communications. Thus, Holt (2004) concludes that, in Mindshare approach, the brand relates itself with a whole range of (otherwise unassociated) value propositions in the consumer's mind.

2.1.2. Brand management:

In the Mindshare model, brand equity is based on the distinctiveness of brand associations. In other words, the source of value is the brand essence that is lodged in the consumers mind. The more firmly it is rooted, and the more differentiated it is from other brands, the stronger the brand value will be.

As Holt (2004) notes that, Mindshare approach requires the brand manager carefully maintain the product innovation and brand communication, which should always be consistent with the brand DNAs. Thus, measurement of a brand's value is, in effect, a measurement of the consumer loyalty and market share of its products. That is to say, Mindshare mainly uses reactive tactics to uphold consistency in communications over time (Holt, 2004). Therefore, quantitative market penetration surveys are essential means to evaluate the share of a brand in certain market (Holt, 2004). Typically, brand research begins with strategic analysis based on subjective segmentation, targeting, and positioning (Kaufmann, Loureiro, Basile & Vrontis 2012). More specifically, the brand owners often subjectively choose and manage the functional (Brown 1953; Jacoby, Olson & Haddock 1971; Jacoby & Kyner 1977; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis 1986) and emotional (Gardner & Levy 1955; Goffman 1959; Levy 1959) benefits they wish to associate with their market offerings. Then these values are embodied in communication (e.g., advertisements and marketing campaigns) and product development (e.g., tactical improvement, product styling and packaging design) to project and maintain consistent brand relevance in consumers' mind (i.e., a set of abstract cognitive associations).

2.1.3. Brand communications:

Holt (2004) notes that, in Mindshare branding, Brand DNA requires careful nurturing to maintain the rational (functional) and emotional relevance between key mental associations and customers' needs. In practice, Mindshare branding relies on persuasive communication that uses popular trends (e.g., ironic advertisements, celebrities, etc.) to reinforce psychological associations.

2.1.4. Advantages and challenges:

Mindshare approach condenses the complex socio-cultural mechanism of the brand into simple and direct Brand DNAs. This simplicity of unified management and evaluation is beneficial for global manufacturers that operating with vast group of brands and products. Additionally, aiming for the consistent brand image through out the time, Mindshare approach makes it easier to out.

Mindshare approach relies on their creative partners (advertising / design agency) to produce innovative ideas. As the brief is often conveyed in abstract and generic terms derive from the brand DNAs, leaving third-party partners unsure how to create resonance between the brand and consumers. Thus, those brand communications can become irrelevant to the target customer (Holt, 2004).

In addition, Mindshare approach constantly demands better and unique functionality, even though new functions do not prove higher market shares. The need for better functionality is predictable and forces companies into developing irrelevant technologies detached from customers' factual needs. Accordingly, companies fall into the competition of building a better 'Mousetrap,' where all the brands are under constant pressure to provide better tactics (Holt & Cameron, 2010).

2.2. Cultural branding

Cultural branding (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010) offers a new branding approach that intends to provoke genuine culture innovation. Holt (2004) claims this cultural approach can break the spell of Mindshare approach, as it can guide a brand to resonate with the ideological evolution of a society and helps maneuver the brand into new market niches. Following the ideas from Holt (2002, 2004) and Merz et al. (2009), in the postmodern branding era, customers are no longer seen as numbers and assets dominated by manufacturers. Consumer culture replaces the individual brand as the ideological authority in the market. That is to say, Cultural approach regards that, in line with the cultural reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1979), consumers are situated in a symbolic world (i.e., *champs*, or context), where all of them take part in the creation of cultural meaning through their daily identity-building practices. As a 'market man' living in a consumer culture, consumers depend on the consumer culture to find purpose of their daily activities (Schroeder, Salzer-Mörling & Askegaard, 2006).

The consumer culture can be illustrated as a system providing cultural materials that represent people's diverse and changing ideas; for instance, 'what it is to be a man or a woman, middle-aged or elderly, a parent, a citizen, or a professional.' These cultural meanings are 'concretized in goods', and people realize the meaning of their life (i.e., build their self-identity) by participating in and consuming these 'cultural products' (MacCracken, 1988, p.88). On a broader scope, cultural branding interconnects cultural materials into idea-clusters (i.e., ideology) that serve consumers' collective identity projects. Ideology is formed with a set of ideas held by certain societal groups that allow them to perceive and understand the world in a certain and consistent way (Thwaites, Davis & Mules, 2002). Cultural branding is grounded on the assumption that consumer culture evolves overtime alongside major ideological changes in the society. Cultural strategy makes use of this understanding — that ideologies change over time — to build brands that express ideas and emotions which help consumers to 'organizing their life within a society' (Holt & Cameron, 2010, P.173).

2.2.1. Brand components:

In Holt's cultural approach, a brand is viewed as a 'cultural artifact moving through history' (2004, p. 215). It competes in the same manner as cultural products like movies, TV programs, and pop music. Following the ideological changes of the society, iconic brands create cultural expressions that offer "particular cultural contents of the brand's myth and the particular expression of these contents in the communication" so as to keep the brand relevant to the consumers' life context over time (Holt, 2004, p.36). As myths evolve, they form their own niche—'Myth market' in the consumer market. The following paragraphs summarize the mechanism of the 'Myth market':

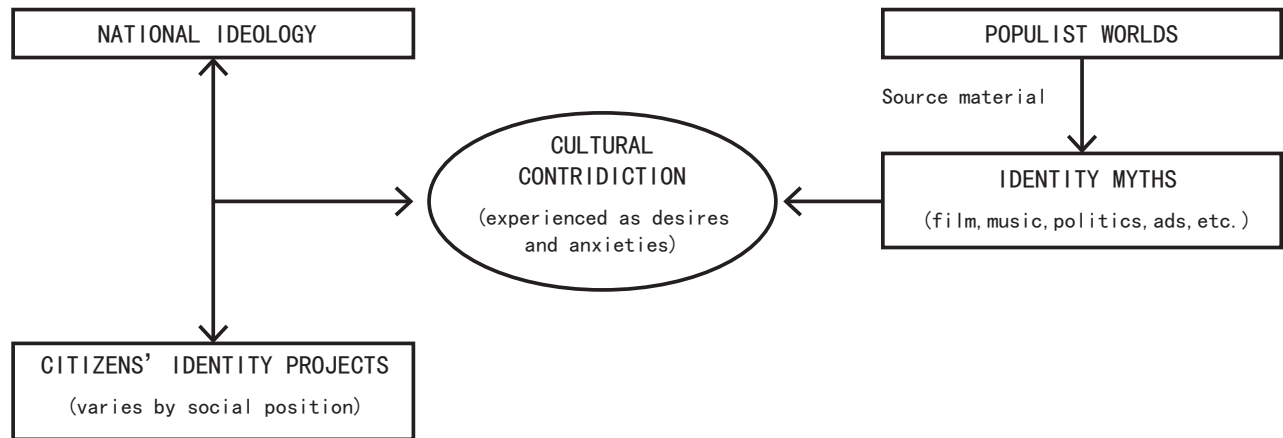


Figure 2.2 the structure of the myth market (Source: Holt, 2004)

As indicated in Figure 2.2, the emergence of a Myth Market is triggered by the '**Cultural Contradiction**' between the '**National Ideology**' and '**Citizens' Identity Projects**'. Inspired by the Cultural Contradiction, Identity Myths are created out of cultural materials sourced from 'populist worlds'. As they consume Identity Myths, customers are relieved of the desires and anxieties caused by the Cultural Contradiction. The relief and reassurance that a brand's myth gives to its consumers in turn gives authority to the brand to determinate its territory in the consumer 'Myth Market.'

In Holt's opinion, 'National Ideology' universally exists in all political and cultural territories, and "citizens must identify with the nation, accept its institutions, and walk towards its betterment"(Holt, 2004, p.56). As Holt (2004) claims, this harmonization is not always smooth; an individual's own practices and aspirations sometimes fail to match up with the nation's ideals and his social context. When these conflicts (i.e., **Cultural Contradictions**) exceed tolerance, individuals suffer from 'intense desires and anxieties' and start to crave 'symbolic resolutions' (i.e., **identity myths**) that mitigate the tension (Holt, 2004). These **Cultural Contradictions** pinpoint emerging shifts in a nation's ideology and reveal potential opportunities for new **Identity Myths** that, in turn, open up new niches in the '**myth market**' (Holt, 2004).

When a brand is pioneering a new 'myth market' with successful myths, it gains cultural and political authority. As mentioned above, national ideology changes over time. When one ideology becomes outdated, it loses authority to define people's sense of identity. Consequently, the existing myths and the new myths that the myth market is constantly building begin to clash. Meanwhile, new social and market structures are being established to reflect new ideologies in real time. This phenomenon is called **Social Disruption**. The most long-lasting iconic brands are pioneers that provide the right myths in according to the upcoming social disruptions. They respond quickly to social disruptions and constantly adapt their brand to new ideologies. Hence, these brands rise up with the ideological zeitgeist of each historic turning point of societal change, remain iconic, and retain a loyal consumer base (Holt &Cameron, 2010).

2.2.2. Brand communication:

When managing a brand with the cultural approach, the company weaves carefully selected culture codes into myths that help innovate authentic cultural expression. These myths are embodied in the form of consumable cultural products. Then, consumers ritually purchase and consume these “cultural products” to “relive” these myths (Holt, 2004, p.59).

When more than one company addresses the myths along the same cultural contradiction, the most authentic myth will win over the audience. As Holt (2004) suggests, an iconic brand should perform as a social activist, spurring audiences to think beyond their acquired national value of themselves as they consume breakthrough cultural materials from the ‘**Populist World.**’ Holt (2004) found that Populist Worlds are places inhabited by groups of social activists who live out their original beliefs through their daily practices. These people “share a distinctive ethos that provides intrinsic motivation for their actions” (Holt, 2004, p.9). Populist Worlds are usually found at the edges of the society. In such places, people are expected to act rebellious and break free from traditional economic and social institutions established by the dominant culture. The populist world is an authentic source of **culture code** (i.e., most relevant cultural materials for composing the myth), because three reasons:

1. The populist world is perceived as a free culture, the ethos of which is the collective and involuntary product of the participants. The ethos has not been imposed upon them.
2. The activities within the populist world are perceived as intrinsically valuable by the participants, who are not motivated by commercial or political interests.
3. Reinforcing these perceptions, Populist worlds are often set in places far removed from the centers of commerce and politics. In worlds that have been commercialized (sports and music are key examples), populist perceptions are harder to maintain because the participants must fight off commercial attributions.

Chart 2.2 the characteristics of populist worlds (Source: Holt, 2004)

Myth consumptions can be seen as an individual’s ritual practices (Giddens, 1984; Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007) or habitus (Bourdieu, 1979) which helps him/her to mitigate the social tension caused by cultural contradictions in society (Holt, 2010). Every time a customer purchases and consumes product, they experience some part of the myth. To make an analogy, the majority of consumers (i.e., brand followers) are seen as audiences of a fantasy play written by the brand, which feeds them with ideologies and practices (i.e., habitus) from the ‘Populist World’ to which most of them have never belonged (Holt, 2002, 2004).

As the myth is composed with authentic cultural materials, cultural codes (i.e., practices or habitus of individuals) from the ‘populist world’, it resonates with a sense of reality, which makes the myth believable (Holt, 2004). That is to say, brands generate relevance towards the individuals through **Identity Myth** which, in turn, influence these individuals’ daily practices through cultural consumptions.

2.2.3. Brand management:

HISTORICAL CHANGES

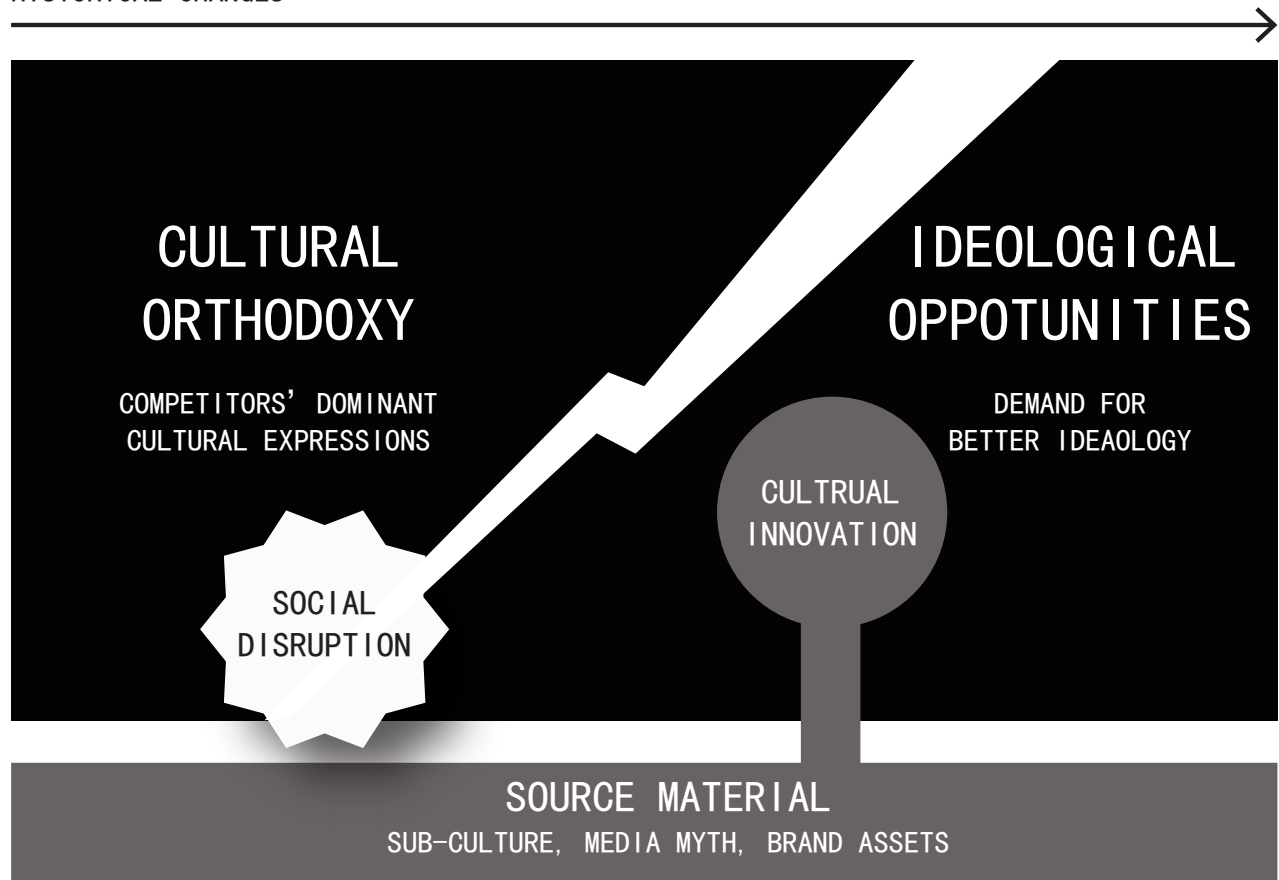


Figure 2.3 the cultural strategy model of Holt and Cameron (Source: adapted from Holt & Cameron, 2010)

Holt and Cameron (2010) explain that to fully embrace a Cultural approach (see Figure 2.3), a brand manager should become a social activist who helps introduce new ideologies into the society. Therefore, a branding professional should advocate their brand as a cultural product that contains concrete and genuine content. For that purpose, Branding professionals should immerse themselves in cultural products like art, mass media, and fashion, along with subcultures, so as to acquire a better understanding of ideological opportunities that can be used to inspire brand communications (Holt & Cameron, 2010).

Additionally, Holt and Cameron (2010) also suggest a brand manager to **weigh** the dominating cultural expression of the market, pinpoint a unique historical, social disruption and **respond** to the emerging 'cultural contradictions' by **employing** accurate cultural codes to the myth of their brand that **accommodate** the cultural appeals caused by social tensions. Hence, a skilled brand professional can use cultural strategies to build solid ground upon which to create the best myth for their product. They can also guide their creative partners to communicate specific cultural codes sourced from Populist Worlds to precisely express the story. In such way, these collaborative branding works should result in highly effective myth making that leads to **cultural innovations** (Holt & Cameron, 2010).

2.2.4. Advantages and limitations:

Brands developed with cultural strategy leverage ideological, social changes. As figure 2.6 indicated, those culturally innovative brands can reap the benefits of the 'white spaces' in the market while avoiding the pressure to compete in the rat race of tactical innovations (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Viewed through the lens of cultural logic, 'white spaces' are defined by the desire for a new ideology, not a desire for better function. This innovation about new ideology is so called Culture innovation by Holt and Cameron (2010). As mentioned above, when social disruption occurs, the authority of the old myth shatters over time. This releases customers from old national ideologies (as well as old Identity Myth) and makes them eager for alternatives that better suit their search for self-identity. This kind of ideological opportunities allows young companies steal market shares from Orthodoxy brands, while avoiding waste resources in the competition of better functions. This advantage is especially profound for start-ups with limited financial and cultural capitals.

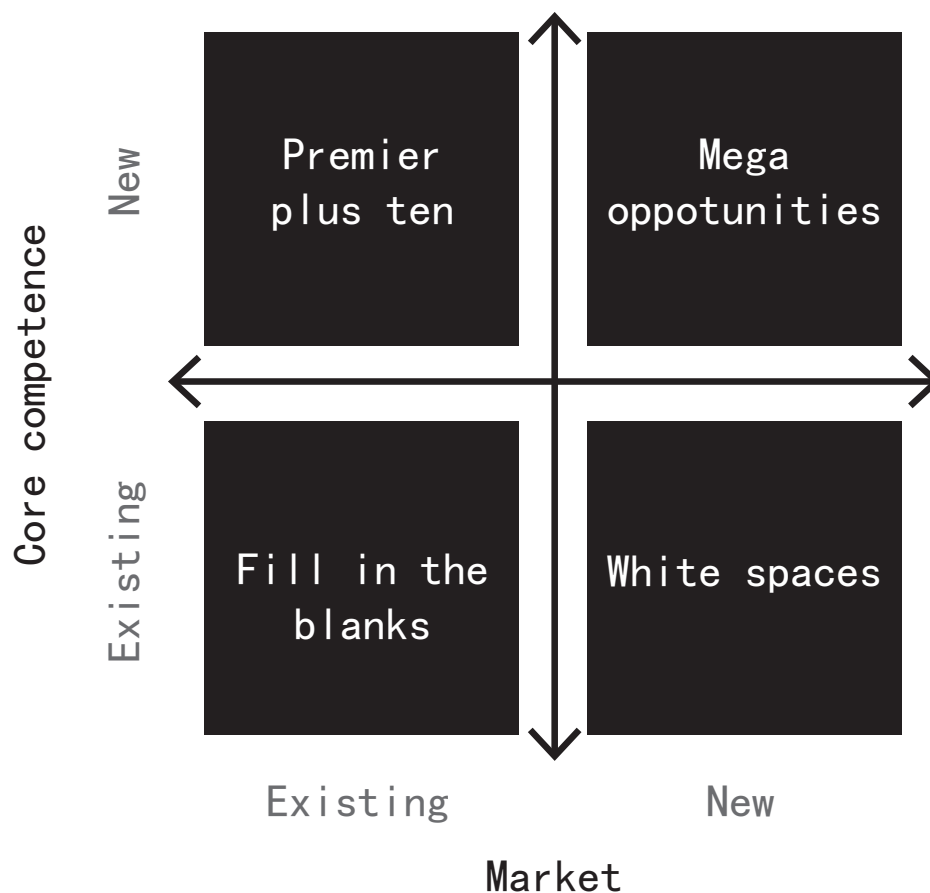


Figure 2.4 The Hamel and Prahalad model comprises four core competencies

(Source: adapted from Hamel & Prahalad, 1994)

As described above, successful cultural strategy is customized to a precise time and context. Innovations created by new ideological opportunities are uniquely relevant to the 'historical moment and particular group of people'. Therefore, a brand, built in according to original cultural materials, holds advantages when competing with copycat brands that rush into the new niche.

Nevertheless, in Cultural approach, cultural expression replaces persuasive arguments to build brand authority. Cultural expression relies on myth communication, which requires sustainable marketing outreach and mature product offerings embedded with appropriate myths; small companies with limited resources cannot always develop or maintain this level of marketing.

Furthermore, As Holt (2004) notified, Cultural branding often views customers as not belonging to the populist world that supplies the cultural contents of the cultural expression. Consumers may come to depend on certain brands to define the meaning of their daily lives, and they may fall into a cycle of continuously purchasing and consuming the 'cultural product' proposed by the brand to reassure themselves of their identity (Holt, 2002). In such cases, consumers begin to derive purpose and identify by the endless 'pursuits' of material possessions (Holt, 1995). The global anti-brand movement expresses some of the many concerns about the dangers of iconic branding. No Logo (Naomi Klein, 1999) addressed deep concerns about the inauthenticity and ultimate unattainability of iconic brands. Klein (1999) charges iconic brands of offering images and promise without real values. In the global No brand (i.e., anti-brand) movement, iconic brands become subjects of a 'revolutionary' agenda aimed at their collapse.

Kalle Lasn is another major player in the anti- brand movement. He is the founder of Ad-busters and advocates the 'un-cooling,' 'un-swooshing' and 'de-marketing' of the US consumer marketplace. Lasn(1999) worries that culture is becoming more 'top-down' than 'bottom-up' due to the manipulation of global companies and brand corporations. He argues that culture (like national ideology) is losing its authenticity and no longer expresses the collective values of a society, but rather is being manipulated to serve corporate brands. The cultural materials (e.g., brands, products, entertainments, celebrities) takeover the role of culture itself to provide authority in society. An individual's search for identity is hijacked by mass-media commercials, making it increasingly difficult for a person to be true to him or herself. Anti-brand Ad-busters urge 'the people' to fight 'the cool machine,' refuse the advertising and purchase fewer consumer goods. Lasn (1999) encourages people to take back the initiative of creating cultural meaning in their daily lives.

The two global anti-brand movements address a major fault of cultural branding. When consuming the myths, the consumer can only partially lessen the social tension. Even the great myths can only provide small 'epiphanies—moments of recognition' that satisfy thirst or other sensory desires. This does ***not necessarily lead to the sustainable behavioral change that is required to actualize the aspirations of consumers.***

2.3. Scoping a branding model for ALV

As discussed previously that, Mindshare branding is a product-oriented branding model requires comparatively low contextual understanding of the target consumers. Thus, this model could have been appropriate if the ALV still served the public sector where competition is mainly functional and requires little end-user involvement. As Holt (2004) suggests, the Mindshare model works for a short period when a company's business is running steadily in a solid routine; however, the study above argues that Mindshare approach does not necessarily work to help a small company, like ALV, revitalize its brand and increase market share.

As Holt (2004) suggested, the Mindshare model is not a good choice to revive a failing business that has been made irrelevant by historical changes. Thus, since ALV determines to step out of the subdued public elderly-care market, it should also discard its old branding model. Due to the limitations of the Mindshare model, ALV's executives currently are atalossas to how to navigate their business toward new market opportunities. ALV's ICT solutions were developed in the context of traditional elderly care, which rely heavily on public institutions. Although ALV is trying to create the relevance between young elderlies (i.e., Finnish boomers) and their home-care solutions, shaping its innovation in Mindshare approach, ALV is still strongly associated with the image of dependent elderly life in a care-home alike environment instead of with the new image of the active elderly.

On the contrary, as discussed above, Cultural approach is relevant to ALV philosophically. Following this model, ALV may identify the ideological opportunities that promote the 'Active Aging' culture to mitigate the emerging Cultural Contradiction caused by the bloom of aging retirees. Nonetheless, the implication of ideological opportunities is restricted in capacity for myth-communication. For baby boomers, actualizing positive changes in their life is the real crux of their social tension. Genuine cultural expression rather than a passing participation in mythical illusions will be needed to bring them into the 'populist world' and permanently change their attitudes and behavior in the Social Disruption caused by aging boom.

Not every brand (like ALV) is meant to be a global cultural icon. But that does not mean they cannot take advantages of the ideological opportunities that emerge from growing Cultural Contradictions. The following chapters present a further methodological exploration, through which I continue the inquiry of how a Cultural branding approach, employed differently, can lead the re-branding of small service company like ALV.

2.3.1. Evolving Cultural approach- Brand as citizen artist

Holt's article 'Why brands cause trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding' (2002) analyzes the tensions between the iconic brands (champions of the postmodern branding paradigm) and the 'No Logo' anti-brand movement and proposes a paradigm shift to new brand logic – Citizen Artist. Holt's 'Citizen Artist' logic (2002) envisions a future implementation of Cultural approach, which seems as a potential direction to further pursue the methodology of adapt Cultural approach to the brand transformation of ALV.

Along with the evolution of theories on branding, scholars have done much to examine the same concept (i.e., brand) with various perspectives in multiple contexts and time periods (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2008). Those conceptualizations that are collectively accepted and practiced by researchers and company executives are also named 'Brand logic.' Brand logic mirrors the on-going changes occurring in different economies, time periods and phases of market maturation (Goodyear, 1996). Holt (2002) explains that anti-brand movements pinpoint the evolution of the consumer market. This movement should be seen as a consumer revolution that assists 'entrepreneurial firms to tear down the old branding paradigm and create opportunities for companies that understand emerging new principles' (Holt 2002, p. 89).

	<i>Postmodern branding paradigm</i>	<i>Post-postmodern branding paradigm</i>
Time frame	1960s and onwards	Emerging (c. 2000)
Consumer culture	Seeking personal sovereignty and identity construction through brands	Cultivating self through consumption of brands
Marketing function	In constant negotiation with consumer culture	Providers of original and relevant cultural material
Branding paradigm characteristics	1 Authentic cultural resources 2 Ironic, reflexive brand persona 3 Coat-tailing on cultural epicenters 4 Life world emplacement 5 Stealth branding	The brand as a cultural resource in its own right + a community pillar + honesty about profit motive

Chart 2.3 *The postmodern and the post-postmodern branding paradigm (Source: Adapted from Holt 2002).*

As chart 2.3 indicated, Holt (2002) claims the Postmodern Brand is perceived as a cultural phenomenon that embodies 'cultural product' and mitigates social tensions through myth. While, the Post-postmodern brand, from Holt's perspective (2002), act as **cultural artist** that holds a power of boost the actual societal changes themselves together with a community of local citizens. That is to say, companies in the era of the Post-postmodern **brand should create genuine cultural contents and collaborate closely with citizens. Accordingly, brands shoulder the responsibility and actualize ideological innovation together with the local community.**

Derived from typical Cultural approach, Citizen Artist brand logic allows ALV a perception to stimulate consumers to participate identity-building practices through cultural expressions. While, this kind of stimulation differs from the self-realization one gains through 'reliving' myths and requires 'self-actualization' that incorporating new ideology into daily practices. Above all, Citizen Artist logic may help a brand overcome the limitation of Cultural approach that, brand value cannot be fully delivered by consuming mythical products (i.e., advertisements, myths embedded in consumer goods). Instead, a brand may generate value by cultivating local consumers to actualize their aspirational identity through daily practices in community.

In line with the typical Cultural approach, the common methodology – like identifying Social Disruptions, defining Cultural Contradictions, and scoping cultural materials (i.e., Cultural codes) –

are applicable to Citizen Artist logic. Nevertheless, Citizen Artist logic, differing from the Mythical expression, is largely associated with creating opportunities for consumers acquire and practice the habitus (Bourdieu, 1980) that trigger and sustain the desired new ideology. ALV should try to associate its brand with empowering consumers' active participation in practicing original and relevant cultural contents (i.e., Cultural Codes) in their daily lives. Thus, the further methodological exploration should bring more nuance to the Citizen Artist logic, with the purpose of adapting the Cultural approach to one that will: ***empower the customers to cultivate themselves through sustainable identity-building practices that offer value in actualizing the new ideology in real life.***

2.3.2. Embracing the Service Brand logic-Brand as service

Merz, He and Vargo (2009) synthesized the evolution of brand research and drew the conclusion that the branding paradigm is shifting toward viewing the brand as a service. Service brand logic regards brands as ***"collaborative, value co-creation activity of firms and all of their stakeholders"*** (Merz et al., 2009, p.329).

Through a service lens, "the brand value co-creation process is a continuous, social, and highly dynamic and interactive process between the firm, the brand, and all stakeholders" (Merz et al., 2009, p. 331).

Merz et al. (2009) suggested that when building a brand (in a service form), a company could gain benefits if it would "reflect and influence the cultural and ideological movement of the entire society." The brand should also "encourage customers to become voluntarily involved in the brand value co-creation process, and hence create brand value from the bottom up rather than from the top down." (Merz et al., 2009, p. 342)

In such way, service brand logic shares a mutual vision of Holt's Citizen Artist logic that encourages value co-creation among the brand, customers and other stakeholders in local communities. Service Brand logic gives a feasible way to achieve the objective of building a brand collaboratively with citizens in the form of service. More specifically, Service Brand logic offers evidences that make service to be an appropriate way to embed cultural content, because service acquire and very likely sustain the participation of a customer in value co-creation activities. Hence, it consists with rich experiential cultural codes (i.e. habitus, ritual practices) through which the customers habituate themselves into living out the new ideologies.

Therefore, I advocate that the brand transformation of ALV could follow a service-logic adaptation of Cultural branding approach. **ALV may co-create cultural contents, in terms of ritual practices, with citizens so as to create a context that is valuable in actualizing the new ideology.** The following section presents the overview of service-dominant (SD) Logic. Understanding this fundamental approach firms the methodological foundation that grounds the adaptation of Cultural branding in service logic.

2.4. Service-Dominant logic and brand value creation

Just as its name implies, Service-Dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2004b, 2008) is a marketing logic that advocates the fundamentality of service in business practices. This logic overthrows the traditional marketing logic that oriented to the sales and logistics of consumer goods (Vargo & Lusch, 2004b). Service-Dominant logic (SD logic) is embodied in ten fundamental premises (Vargo & Lusch 2008) listed in Figure 2.4 below.

	<i>Foundational premise</i>	<i>Explanation/Justification</i>
FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.	The application of operant resources (knowledge and skills), "service," is the basis for all exchange. Service is exchanged for service.
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.	Goods, money, and institutions mask the service-for-service nature of exchange.
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision.	Goods (both durable and non-durable) derive their value through use – the service they provide.
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	The comparative ability to cause desired change drives competition.
FP5	All economies are service economies.	Service (singular) is only now becoming more apparent with increased specialization and outsourcing.
FP6	The customer is always a co-creator of value.	Implies value creation is interactional.
FP7	The enterprise cannot deliver value but only offer value propositions.	The firm can offer its applied resources, and collaboratively (interactively) create value following acceptance, but cannot create or deliver value alone.
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational.	Service is customer-determined and co-created; thus, it is inherently customer oriented and relational.
FP9	All economic and social actors are resource integrators.	Implies the context of value creation is networks of networks (resource-integrators).
FP10	Value is always uniquely, and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.	Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning-laden.

Chart 2.4 Foundational Premises of Service-Dominant Logic (Source: Vargo & Akaka, 2009, p.35)

According to the founders of SD logic, Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2004b, 2008) suggests that there are four essential elements (FP1, FP6, FP9, Fp10) of these premises for understanding the concept of 'service': Value is exchanged through Service; Value is co-created; Co-creation shapes Service Ecosystem; Value is perceived in the context. In the following texts, each of the four essential elements is illustrated further to explain the nature of service.

2.4.1. Value is exchanged through service

Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2004b, 2008) found classic economic theory (e.g., Marshall 1927; Walars 1954) views value as embedded utility (of product) in exchange for profits. Contrary to the classic, Vargo and Lusch (2004a, 2004b, 2008) consider that exchange in the marketplace occurs fundamentally through service, rather than through the trade of tangible or intangible products.

Here, Vargo and Lusch (2004) particularly stress that the term 'service' (singular) differs from its plural meaning. Service does not intend to indicate the productized services (e.g., services like software, banking, insurance) as (intangible) revenue producing units (see FP2 on Chart 2.4). Rather, it is defined as the application of one's competencies (knowledge and skills) for the benefit of another (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b, Lusch, Vargo & Wessels 2008). From this standpoint, in general, all economic and social activities in the market are, fundamentally, service-for-service exchanges (i.e., serve each other by applying one's specialties).

From service perspective, the value of a brand, in line with Citizen Artist logic, is essentially about assisting consumers to actualize identity-building projects with new ideologies and corresponding practices. In theory, consumer should be able to gain value more directly through service participation. This assumption is further discussed in the rest of this section.

2.4.2. Value is co-created

In the service model, the customer is primarily the co-producer rather than the 'money bags' targeted by the company (Vargo & Lusch, 2011a). Customers should be 'involved in the entire value and service chain', and not just be the party that pays the bill and consumes the result. (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p.11)

Co-creation is not the same as 'co-production.' Co-production refers to the participation of other parties (i.e., other firms, customers, NGOs, governments, etc.) in the creation of the value-proposition (i.e., the firm's product offerings). On the contrary, the co-creation of value always requires the participation of the entire beneficiary (through use and integration with other resources, etc.) to realize the value-proposition for each beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch 2006, 2008a, Maglio & Spohrer 2008). "There is no value until an offering is used – experience and perception are essential to value determination" (Vargo & Lusch, 2006, p. 44).

Value co-creation often involves multiple parties (e.g. customer, suppliers, stakeholders, and other network partners) in a complex system. (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; Normann, 2001). Eventually, these values require the participation of the beneficiary (often, the customer) to be actualized through his or her participation in the process of procurement, usage and disposal (Holbrook, 1987). The different ways those stakeholders (i.e., beneficiaries) adapt to actualize value through this collaborative process is one way through which the service model can be examined systematically.

2.4.3. Co-creation shapes Service Ecosystem

Many studies analyze value co-creation in service systems (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008). In order to sustain the systems of the mutual service provision, a service must consist of a co-dependent network of actors.

In the classic Good-Dominant Logic, marketers view value exchange as a process in which one party (i.e., producer) creates value and another (i.e., consumer) consumes it (Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001). This can also be seen from the Myth-driven Cultural practice in postmodern era. The customers merely participate into the creation of cultural expression. As the result, they only partially mitigates their social tension, while, rarely makes actualizes the dream portrayed in the myths. From the service perspective, this limitation can be reduced, as customers are actively

shaping the service system where, through co-creating cultural contents, their self-identities can be actualized in collaborative manners.

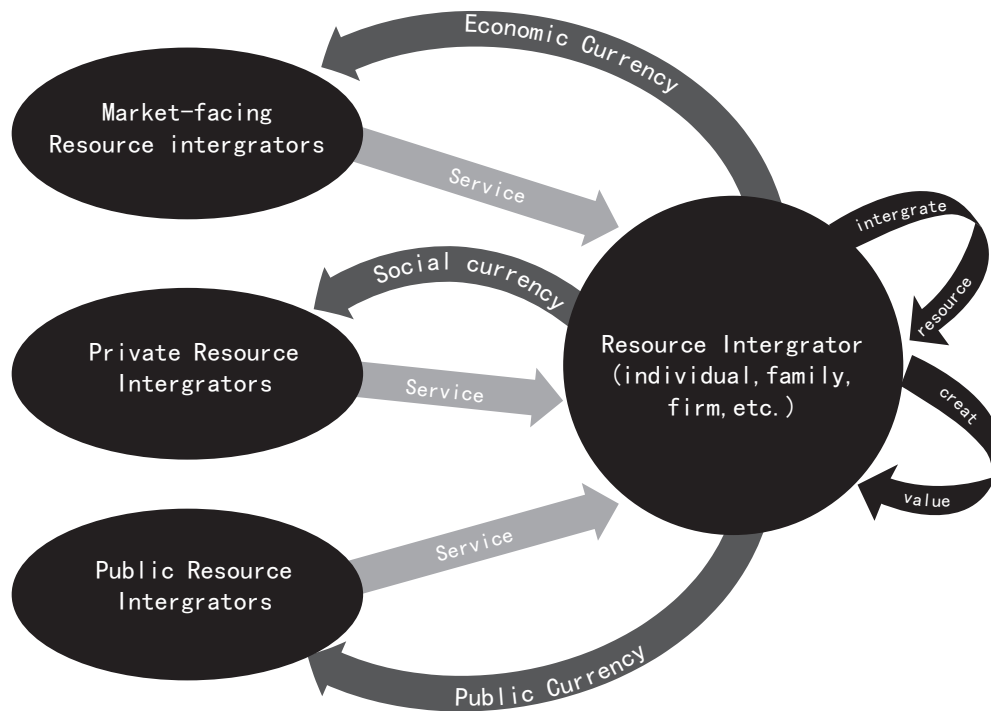


Figure 2.5 Value Co-creations through Resource Integration & Service Exchange
(Source: Adapted from Vargo & Akaka, 2009, p. 146)

Figure 2.5 depicts a service ecosystem consisting of individuals or groups of resource integrators (e.g. families, firms, nations, etc.). Forming sub-systems, actors in the ecosystem adapt and evolve through the facilitation and integration of resources (ideologies, knowledge and practices) among each other. These actors gain and integrate resources to create new resources. Those resources can be used to co-create value for the actors and can also be used as currency which actors can use to procure services or acquire additional resources.

We may think about Cultural branding as a form of value co-creation in a service system. One obtains cultural contents (i.e., ideology, and corresponding practices) in the form of identity myths from market-facing resources (i.e., advertisements, myth-embedded products). One also gains cultural contents from private resources such as one's own life experiences and practices, as well as those of one's friends and peers. In addition to that, national rituals and social norms can be considered public resources. From the branding perspective, these individuals' resource-exchange practices collectively shape a complex multidimensional social network wherein brand value is co-created, which in turn shape the brand myths. The picture that starts to emerge is the shift of Myth-driven Cultural approach from a linear Myth-broadcast manner to a model that involves multiple parties in the co-creation of cultural contents for and within each other in a (complex) system: the service ecosystem.

More specifically, Vargo and Lusch (2011b) noted service ecosystems as "relatively self-contained, self-adjusting systems of resource-integrating actors connected by shared institutional Logics and mutual value creation through service exchange." In other words, value is co-created in the dynamic context of the ecosystem that operates on many levels beyond the linear dyadic relationship between firm and customer. In the service ecosystem, firms act as mediators of the value co-creation process (Vargo & Akaka, 2012). They integrate resources only to propose value propositions (i.e., new ideologies) and service provisions (i.e., cultural contents embodied in products)(See FP7 on chart 2.4). These propositions of value weave the structure of the service system by forming the linkages and relationships among actors. In other words, brand value (cultural expression) in this ecosystem does not just produce by 'firm' and consume by 'customer.' There are many interactions among various actors in the system occurring simultaneously in various scales of networking contexts (e.g., micro, meso, and macro).

Lusch, Vargo and Wessels (2008,p.6) noted that, 'the contextual perspective suggests that what firms provide should not be understood in terms of outputs with value' (e.g. Product (and services) provision embedded with myths), "but rather as resource inputs for a continuing value-creation process" (i.e. Cultural contents co-creations that support consumers' self-actualization in real life). Vargo and Lusch (2011a, p. 182) further argue that this perspective moves away from the 'misleading notion of the conceptualization of the linear, chronological creation, flow and destruction of (brand) value'. The paradigm of (brand) value creation is, hence, moving from micro-scale linear model toward 'the existence of a much more complex and dynamic system of actors that relationally co-create value' through social networking across multiple dimensions (i.e., micro, meso and macro scale). At the same time, the social networking activities of actors jointly provide the context through which 'value' gains its individual and collective assessment.

2.4.4. Value is perceived in the context

Service is seen as "unique application of uniquely integrated resources" (Lusch & Vargo, 2006,p.284), which means the **value creation happens in a particular context** "under which different resources will and will not be valuable" (Barney, Wright & Ketchen 2001, P.43). Since service is the use of resources for the benefit of another party (Vargo &Lusch, 2008b; Lusch, Vargo & Wessels 2008), value is uniquely created by the combination of particular resources. In general, resources can be classified into two kinds: operand resources and operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006, 2008a).

Operand resources are the (raw materials of) tangible goods. Operant resources are intangible forces that facilitate operand resources. Operant resources include human (resource integrators' knowledge, skills and habitus), organizational (routines, cultures, competencies), informational (communication, accessible knowledge), and relational (integration among integrators and sub-systems) (Hunt & Derozier, 2004). The value of operant resources (e.g. cultural contents) is more dynamic and variable than operand resources, due to the involvement of human nature. More succinctly, certain operant resources are valuable only to particular audiences (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

As the Cultural branding approach mainly operates on operant resources, value co-creation only validated when viewed holistically in relationship to the beneficiary party (Vargo & Lusch,

2008a). Hence, value can only be determined by a given beneficiary, or at least considering that party as the central referent. Although the interpretation of brand value is different for each individual, it is still possible to study the favor (value) of operant resources in a holistic manner. Broadly speaking, the co-created (brand) value is determined in different scales of context, which requires the existence of “a set of unique actors with unique reciprocal links among them”(Chandler & Vargo, 2011, p. 40).

Seen from this angle, every resource integrator experiences and determines contextualized value under the influence of the (economic, social and cultural) contexts in which he or she (or it) is situated. Chandler and Vargo (2011) conceptualized these different scales of context into three levels: micro (i.e., dual-actor interaction), meso (i.e., multi-actor interaction) and macro (i.e., multi-network interaction).

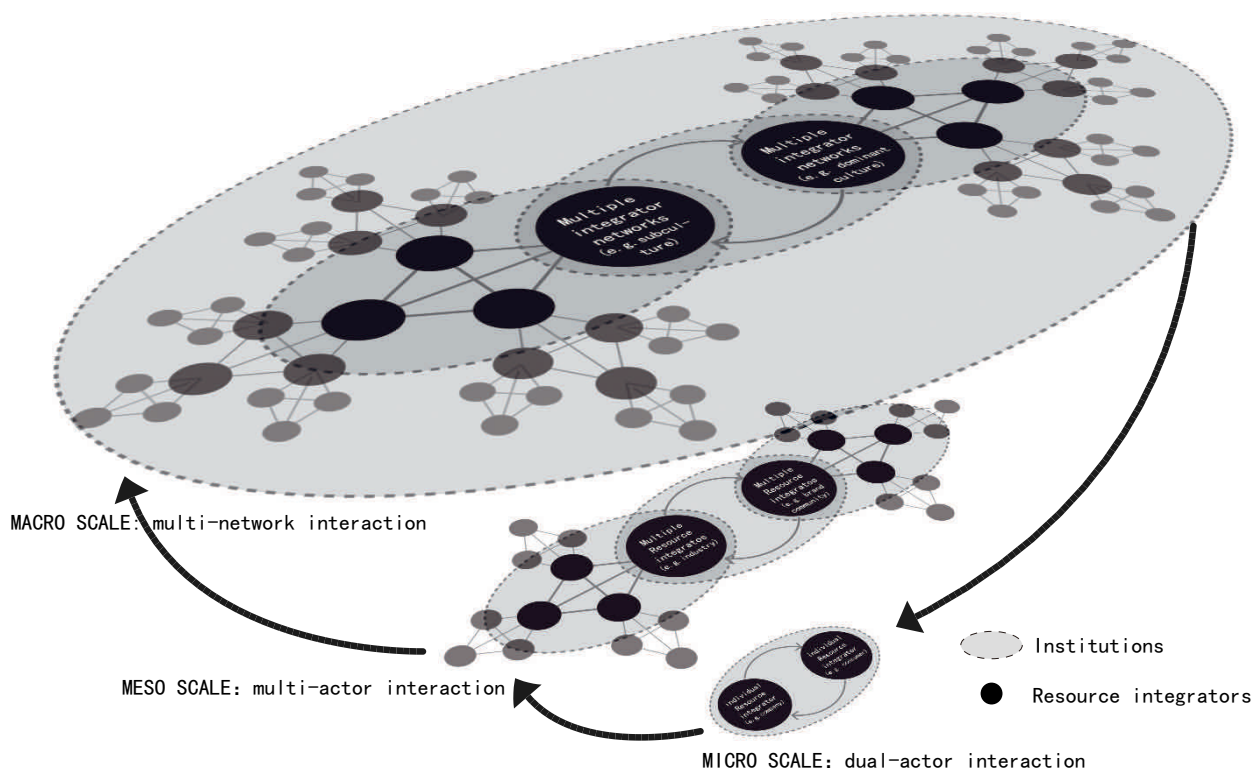


Figure 2.6 Resource Integration & the Structuration of Service Ecosystems

(Source: adapted from Chandler & Vargo, 2011)

As figure 2.6 indicated, ideologies transfer among different scales of context through market-shaping practices acted out by participants in the course of their value co-creation activities. In practical terms, an individual integrator (i.e., actor) perceives value by taking part in the (social and economic) networking activities in various (overlapped) contexts. Change in an actor's practices at any level of context will change the behaviors of all actors, in terms of their representations, thoughts, behavioral norms and habits of value exchange (Giddens, 1984; Slater, 2002).

The existence of institutions—economic and sociological rules—reveals the ideological translation among the levels of context. In other words, institutions are mechanisms that humans

co-create to govern the social and economic exchange processes (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Institutions can occur at a global level (i.e., macro scale) in a society's culture and frame the national ideologies authoring the overall practices of citizens. They can influence at a local level (i.e., micro scale) and serve as the norms of an exchange—the rituals and expectations of how actors must behave in specific circumstances (between customer and company, or customer and customer). Institutions can also be seen at the Meso level that, as a sub-culture and a brand community, shape the collective identity building activates among particular integrators. Multiple institutions can exist to govern the workings of the service ecosystem.

Chandler and Vargo (2011) argue that current marketing research (including branding research) spends too much time looking just at the micro-level. At this level, scholars pay great attention to the customer, or the company, or the interaction between the customer and company. In contrast, a Cultural approach examines markets from the consumer perspective, then ties micro-scale understandings to macro-scale societal changes (Holt, 2004). It addresses the efforts to understand the macro-level social movement and inserts the appropriate cultural content to facilitate myth communication and define consumer products (micro level cultural consumption). However, the cultural branding model overlooks the **meso level** that contains the process of value co-creative practices. In the meso level, the habitus of actors' collective identity projects waves a social network that generates original cultural materials for the macro-level cultural expression. The macro-level ideologies, in turn, influence and create a cultural context that sustains lower-level processes (Geddens, 1977,1984). That is to say, a brand can assist individuals' collective identity building practices at the micro level, with the authentic cultural materials co-created in individuals' social networking activities in the meso-level service system of the brand, which eventually construct cultural contexts that allow individuals to revolutionize the old macro-scale ideology.

In summary, the previous discussion offers evidences that, Cultural approach (especially Citizen artist logic) is methodologically in line with the service logic. Cultural branding can incorporate the value co-creation mechanism of the service paradigm to optimize the brand value of Cultural expressions. In such way, a service-logic adaption of Cultural approach may stress on the meso-scale implication where cultural contents are acquired, exchanged and co-created by individuals through social-networking practices in service system.

2.5. SDCI - A service-logic adapted Cultural approach

Thought the discussion in the previous sections, the exploration of branding approach for ALV has moved away from the Mindshare approach and Myth-driven Cultural approach. Eventually, it leads to a service-logic adaptation of emerging Cultural approach -Citizen artist approach. I name this adapted approach after the mixture of its two origins- 'Service Driven Cultural Innovation (SDCI)'. This adapted Cultural approach includes four fundamental premises as chart 2.5 indicated below:

Foundational premise	Explanation/Justification
FP1 Citizens are primary owner and creator of the (consumer) culture.	The culture is created from a bottom-up fashion. Instead of the company, Citizens are the major contributor of (consumer) culture.

FP2	Citizens are always the co-creator of brand (cultural) value	The ideologies embedded in myths are not valuable until the customers contextually integrate the cultural codes into their identity-building activities for self-actualization.
FP3	A service system builds vital context that sustain brand (cultural) value co-creation.	The brand value is always co-created through service exchanges of (cultural) resources among all actors in a complex network
FP4	The brand cultural innovation is a continuous mechanism in service systems.	The brand consists of an on-going social networking of identity-building activities among customers, company (i.e., the community-pillar) and other likeminded activists (i.e., partners and stakeholders).
FP5	The brand service system should refer to the populist world.	The brand leads citizens to participate into the collective identity-building activities in the service system that incorporate the cultural contents from populist world, which accelerate the actualization of the cultural innovation proposed by the company.

Chart 2.5 *The fundamental premises of service driven cultural innovation (Source: the author)*

Complemented by the service logic, the methodology of SDCI approach, in terms of the research and implication, has evolved from the Cultural approach. These major differences are discussed as follow.

Firstly, the branding research of SDCI extends from the micro-scale examination of the dual-actor interactions between the brand and its consumer. Instead, it emphasizes on identifying the self-identity building practices that, in form of social networking activities in various contexts, target customers live out in daily life. Through the analysis of these practices in service context, it can reveal the social tensions caused by cultural contradictions in the social disruption, and hence indicate certain practices that constitutes of relevant cultural expressions.

In addition to that, the implication of SDCI is also moving away from authorizing the cultural consumption of composed myths for momentary self-realization. SDCI approach is, in line with the service branding logic, turning a brand into a viable self-organizing system, in which the brand co-create cultural contents, in terms of ritual practices, with citizens so as to create a context that is valuable in actualizing the new ideology. Additionally, this system building practice reflects on the societal changes in the institutional and cultural context and strives for a constant involvement (i.e., innovation) to exist. In such way, the brand is able to maintain the relevance to consumer through constant evolvement together with consumers in societal changes.

The literature review, in search of the theoretical foundation and mythology of SDCI approach, governs the further practical branding research aimed to bring out the strategy of ALV's brand transformation. This branding research is structured in three phases of design studies, with the research procedure and corresponding methods of each phase designed according to the SDCI approach. Hence, through this branding research, I may demonstrate empirical evidences and experiences that add more nuances to the SDCI approach. The methodology of this branding research is further explained in the next section.

2.6. The methodology of ALV's branding research in SDCI approach

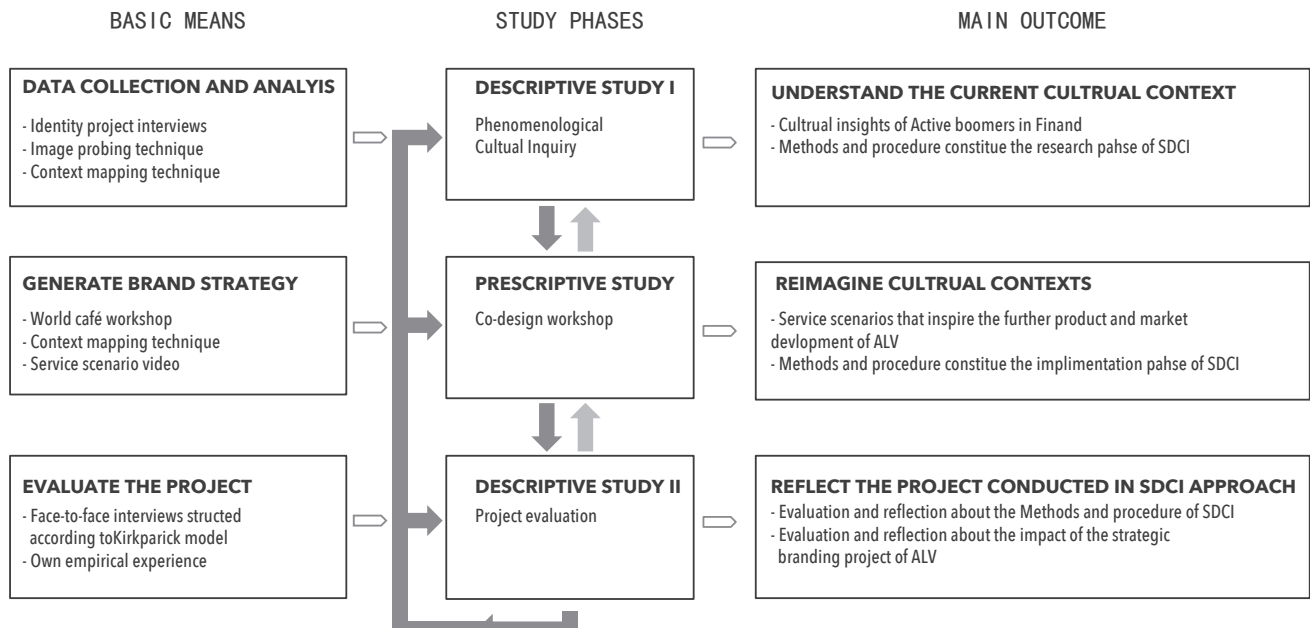


Figure 2.7 The Design Research Methodology of SDCI model for ALV

(Source: adapted from Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009)

Figure 2.7 outlines a strategic branding research process conducted with the purpose of generating strategy for the brand renewal of ALV in SDCI approach. Additionally, this research collects empirical and reflective experience that offering the initial applicability of SDCI approach for small service companies similar to ALV. This strategic branding research is systematically structured in order to increase the scientific significance and practical applicability. More specifically, I followed DRM methodology (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009) to structure this research as a three-phase design study. DRM research approach is an academically creditable research methodology introduced in the book of Blessing and Chakrabarti (2009) - DRM, a Design Research Methodology. DRM methodology is proven to improve the effectiveness of existing theories significantly in a specific situation by enabling more thorough, efficient and effective procedures (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009). Following the DRM methodology, the purpose and result of each reach stages become complementary, which details the implication of SDCI approach and offer evidence to the evaluation accordingly. In my case, DRM approach helps me to show readers how I constructed the processes and methods for applying, demonstrating the SDCI approach to devising new and more effective way to generate strategies that guide the brand transformation of ALV. Meanwhile, this design procedure also exemplifies the possible role of hybrid designer, which offers tools and means to designers aiming to enter the strategic branding territory.

This study walks through the necessary procedure of DRM methodology, in line with the research and implication of SDCI approach in the strategic branding research of ALV, including **Cultural inquiry** (i.e., **Descriptive study I**), **Co-design workshop** (**Prescriptive study**), **Process evaluation** (i.e., **Descriptive study II**), and each stage is visualized as a methodology flow map in Figure 2.7, and each stage is explained as follow.

Culture Inquiry constitutes the first Descriptive study of the design research, and it analyzes the cultural context of Finnish boomers through a service lens, transforming it into cultural insights that inspire branding and innovation. The main methods used for this culture study, a small-sample phenomenological research, are drawn from identity project interview (Holt & Thompson, 2004) to examine the collective identity building activities of the impending retirement life of Finnish baby boomers. I first establish the scope of the sample selection by identifying the boomers who inhabit 'Populist world'. Then, I describe the step-by-step procedure of the in-depth interview powered by image-probing technique. The data analysis process is conducted with context mapping technique, which derives from the SDCI approach to decode the collective identity building activities of boomers in service context. This analysis results in describing cultural insights that illustrate the concerns (e.g., Social Tensions) and aspirations (e.g., Ideological Opportunities) of Finnish baby boomers. Additionally, the collective identity building practices (i.e., Cultural Codes) of boomers are detailed to bring the nuances of the ideological opportunities. These opportunities were used to frame the design theme for the co-design workshop.

Co-Design Workshop constitutes the Prescriptive study of the design research. This study simulates how the SDCI approach bridges cultural insights and tactical brand development. The workshop follows a unique method that, namely World Café, demonstrates a co-creative way to internalize cultural insights and transmute them into brand strategies in the form of service concepts. It first explains the planning and procedures of a co-design workshop. More specifically, I reframe the cultural insights into design themes of the workshop. The workshop stimulates participants, ALV's executives and a team of design students, to create concepts illustrating the service context for cultivating new identity-building practices among boomers. Through the context mapping technique, three service concepts are developed into scenarios. These scenarios are further translated into tactical business development of ALV, which should trigger a mindset change of ALV's executives in terms of a new way to manage the brand and conduct innovation.

Process Evaluation constitutes the second Descriptive study of the design research, in which I presents reflections towards the SDCI approach to ALV's branding project. This study is conducted according to the Kirkpatrick Model (Kirkpatrick, 1959), which includes the evaluation of the procedures, corresponding methods and key insights gained from each stage. It first describes the informants' feedback towards the surveys in which they participated. It then provides samples of questions posed to workshop participants and their responses. It finally describes how this branding research has affected ALV's executives thinking about their brand transformation. This study offers supports for synthesizing the broader implication of SDCI approach in the conclusion.

3

DESCRIPTIVE STUDY I

CULTURAL INQUIRY

As stated previously, this chapter brings out the first in-depth descriptive study, Cultural Inquiry, of the Finnish baby boomers – the emerging consumer cohort of elderly care services. This Cultural inquiry takes a phenomenological research dimension that, in line with Holt's Cultural approach, extends from the micro-scale examination of the dual-actor interactions between the brand and its consumer. Instead, it studies the collective identity-building practices (Holt & Thompson, 2004) that, in form of social networking activities in various contexts, certain group of consumers lives out in daily life.

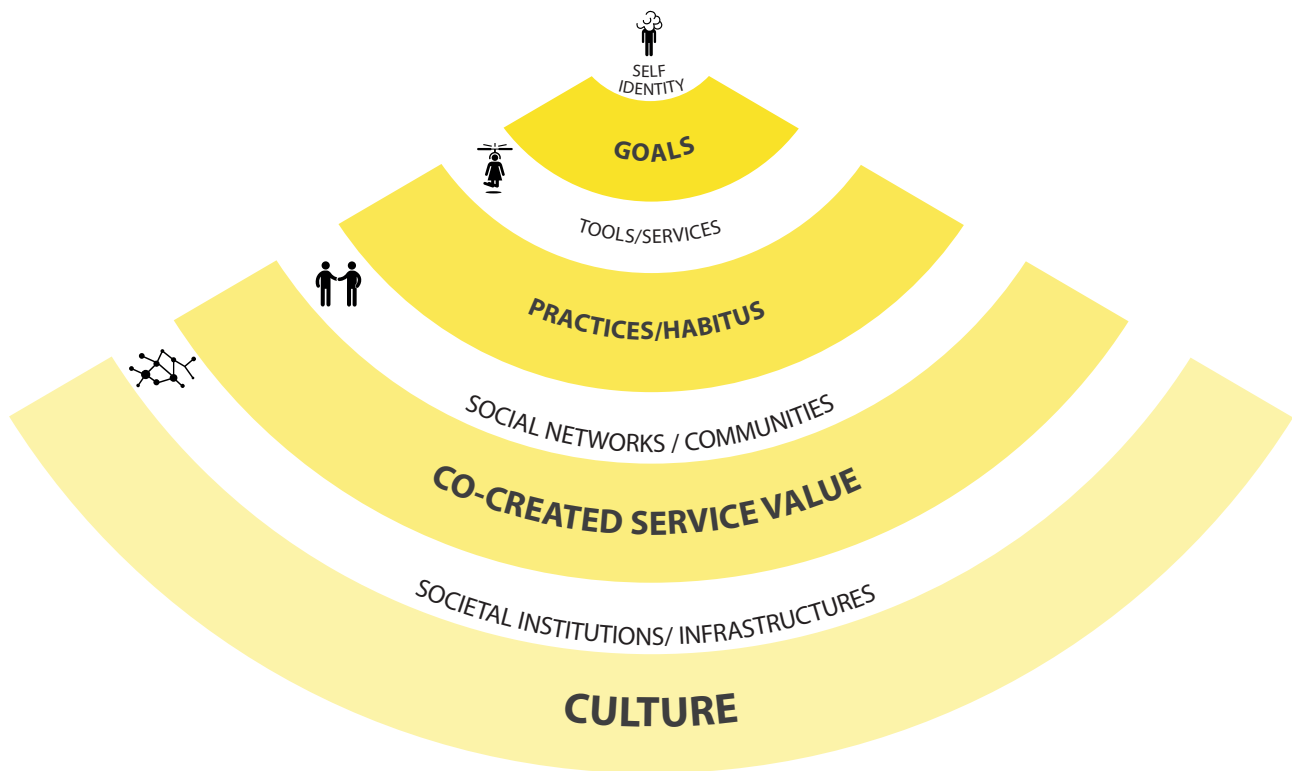


Figure 3.1 Identity project in cultural context (Source: the author)

It is essential to understand that, in SDCI approach, a consumer carries on his/her identity project influencing by a handful of other components in the context. More specifically, as portrayed by both Cultural reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1979) - the fundamental theory behind Holt's Cultural approach - and Service dominant logic (Chandler & Vargo, 2011) that, a social network consists of a fabric of diverse actors, their networking activities collectively shape a cultural context. This cultural context links the subjective idealistic world and the objective materialism world (Bourdieu, 1979). As Bourdieu claims, through the collective practices of individuals, these individuals construct the solid materials (tools, communities, and institutions), based on the common goals, of the physical world around them. And meanwhile, the construction of material world also solidifies rules and norms, as symbols that, reflecting the collective value of the group, align the individuals constitute this social network.

Breaking down the cultural context (See figure 3.2), an individual's identity project, as a mode of living (i.e., Habitus), illustrates the (un) conscious choices of his/ her daily practices (e.g., how to

dress up oneself; what goods to purchase; where and with whom to spend spare time, Etc.). These choices are not entirely based on personal preference. In fact, a social network exist invisible contexts (i.e., champs) that distinguishing or aligning individuals, through cultural consumption, in diverse social groups (Bourdieu, 1979). Without understanding this context, it would be difficult to holistically explain the meaning behind an individual's practices. Hence, this cultural inquiry explores the identity-building practices, of citizens, through a lens of value co-creation in cultural context, rather than examining their consumption behaviors in the role of consumers.

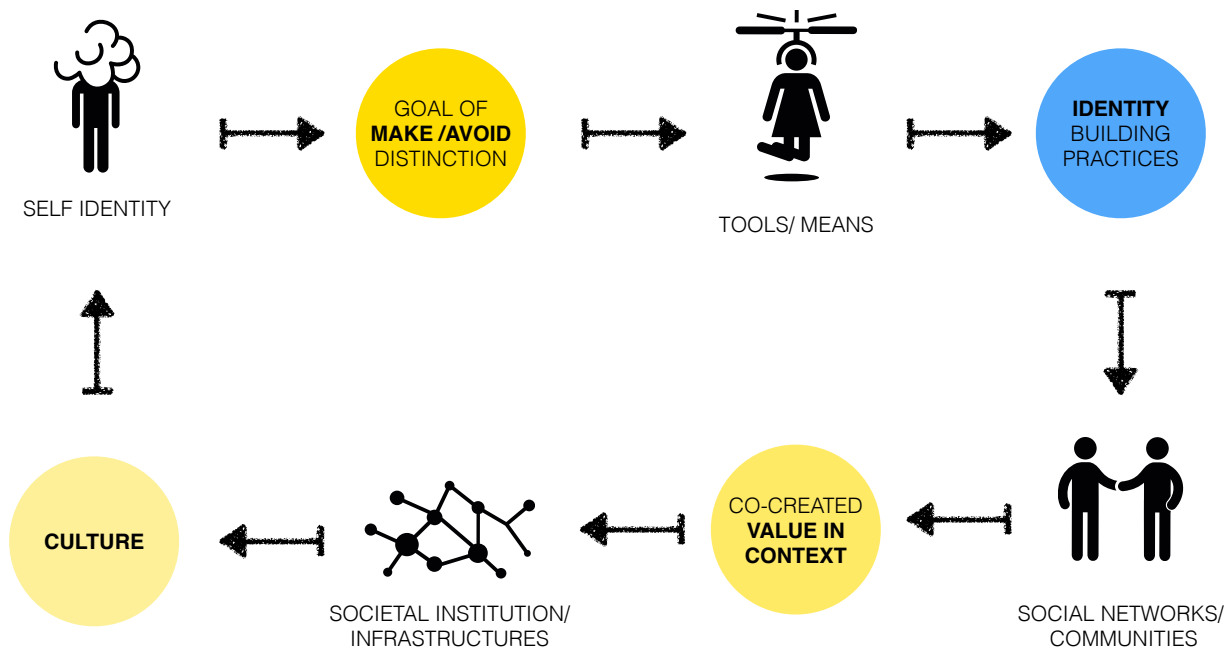


Figure 3.2 Practices builds identity in a collectively constructed service context (Source: the author)

3.1. Overview of Cultural inquiry

Dimension	Phenomenology study
Focus	Understanding the new ideologies of Finnish boomers about the elderly care.
Data Collection	In-depth interviews about identity-building practices of a small sample of Finnish boomers through a lens of service context.
Data Analysis	General description of the content listed as bellow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the Social Disruption from prominent social phenomenon ● Reveal cultural contradictions that boomers endure in the social disruption ● Synthesis common contextual values of boomers' collective identity building practices ● Decodes the Cultural codes from boomers' Identity-building practices
Narrative Form	A mix description of the experiences of informants, author's interpretation, and other relevant contextual cultural materials mentioned in the interviews.

Chart 3.1 the research nature of Descriptive study I (Source: the author)

As described in Chart 3.1, matching the nature of SDCI approach, phenomenological ethnographic method is adopted. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method widely used to understand collective identity projects through analyzing small samples of a social phenomenon (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2008). This approach is open-ended, inductive in discovering meanings and influences and how they are embedded in the activities practiced by the informants (Maxwell, 1998).

This cultural inquiry studies a small sample of individual informants and analyses the subjective experiences of each individual in a holistic manner. More specifically, this study tries to decode the meanings and influences of the collective identity projects performed by the informants. I regard each informant's identity-building practices as a profile of the macro-level interpretation of the cultural context that influences the collective identity of consumers. This phenomenological study is mainly studied for exploring the following questions:

Is there any social disruption caused by aging boom that may change the orthodoxy elder life?

Is there any new ideology of elder life that Finnish baby boomers anticipate to bring on?

Is there any common contextual value of boomers' collective identity projects that is relevant to building a service system for elderly-care purpose? If so, what are the cultural codes constitutes the practices of these identity projects?



Figure 3.3 three-phase research procedure of cultural inquiry (Source: the author)

As figure 3.3 indicated, this cultural inquiry consists of three research phases that, according to the typical procedure of phenomenological study, match the three research questions listed above. The first phase is Scope Recruitment, in which I looked into the relevant social phenomenon of Finnish boomers, through the desk research, to identify the prominent social disruption, and in turn, to scope the informant from the corresponding 'populist world'. The second phase is Data Collection, in which I elicited the subjective experiences, with identity project interviews assisted by image probing technique, of informants' daily practices that they aspire to have in the impending retirement. The last phase is Data analysis, which revealed, through the lens of context mapping technique, cultural insights that illustrate the concerns (e.g., Social Tensions) and aspirations (e.g., Ideological Opportunities) of Finnish baby boomers. Additionally, the collective identity

building practices (i.e., Cultural Codes) of 'populist world' are detailed to bring the nuances of the ideological opportunities of cultural innovation in elderly-care industry. In the following section, I will describe each step with more details.

3.2. First study phase-Scope Recruitment:

According to the projection of Finnish statistic bureau (2011), by the end of 2020, 1.3 million residents—40% of the Finnish population—will be at least 65 years old or older. This sharp peaking of the number of retirees is largely attributed to the aging of post-war baby boomers. Engaging the retiring baby boomers is significantly important for an elderly care service operator. Timo Lindholm, chief economist at the Federation of Finnish Enterprises, noted in a press report in 2010, that this wave of boomers will create market opportunities in private care industries worth an estimated EUR 5-10 billion yearly. Thus, Finnish boomer obviously represents a unique cohort in terms of its vast demographic proportion and consumption power. Moreover, as Finnish sociologist Karisto (2007) suggested, this cohort should be regarded as a generation that "constitutes itself a cultural identity and as a collective one has social significance" (Edmunds and Turner, 2002).

As Karisto (2007) stated in her journal paper, boomers are a crossroad generation. That is to say, boomers are influenced by the old ideology of last generation lived in a cultural context of agriculture and early industrial society. And at the same time, they embrace the new ideology of the modern life in a cultural context of post-industrial society. Boomers are the first generation of elderlies who has collectively experienced the Youth culture and the mentality of 'forever young'. This collective experience is "completely unknown to the preceding generation whose youth was overshadowed by the experience of war" (Karisto, 2007). In addition, boomers have been 'avant-garde' in reconstructing the social experiences throughout of their life cycle. While, as a bridging generation, they "have a life historical connection to the most traditional ethos of rural society" (Karisto, 2007). Given boomers' large demographic proportion in society, they have often determined what society considers its shared values, both politically and culturally. Now, with so many boomers entering retirement, we should expect that they would redefine the values of senior life. Thus, there is a high chance that, a prominent social disruption can be found in the current cultural context of the elderly that dominated by last generation.

This social disruption is not an ideological hypothesis, but rather a real-life phenomenon that, along with the global aging, take place across the continents. For example, in 2011, ABC News reported a series of in-depth interviews on the 'retirement revolution' in America (Shipmen& Forer 2011). According to that report, 54% of the informants say they are considering reinventing themselves after retiring, which shows their belief in a 'second act' in life.

Finland is also showing signs of a retirement revolution. In 2010, a survey from consulting firm Redera and pollster Taloustukimus reported, "Finland's aging baby-boomers are universally unfulfilled about their present and future prospects in the country." About half of them feel they are victims of an over-hurried, unjust and downward social transition, despite their educational, financial and health status. They are concerned that aging will lead their lives into unstable financial conditions and make it harder to achieve their goals. In a press report (Nordal, 2010) of this survey,

Isa Merikallio, Redera's Chief Executive Officer, and Manager of the survey, stated that many boomers "might yearn for retirement. But once they finally retire, they find it does not solve their problems and might make them worse".

I view this is a proof that new ideologies about 'elderly life' must firmly exist in this generation of Finnish boomers. In other words, due to the incomplete reconstruction of the cultural context of elderly life, elder boomers may realize that there is no way but arrange their retirement life according to the practices of the last generation. Unable to fulfill the aspiration of a new kind of retirement life, these boomers could endure a serious cultural contradiction.

According to Holt's approach, when interviewing informants, it is important to avoid 'feeders' in certain myth markets. Holt divided the myth markets into three categories: insider, follower, and feeders. Insiders are the most rare of these three kinds, as they authentically live out the new ideology of the populist world. Followers are those who dedicatedly look for the new ideology to mitigate social tensions. The rest of the population consists of feeders, the massive stream of consumers who are passively looking up to the fashions that insiders and followers practice according to the myths. Thus, they have an irrelevant and personal understanding of the emerging ideology, which could mislead the research. As discussed, the retired boomers in Finland are dissatisfied with their impending retirement life. It is clear that they are anxiously pressed by the current culture contradiction while their 'mistreated' feeling marks them as the victims who failed in searching for means that lessen the social tensions.

Thus, when scoping the informant among Finnish boomers, my first option was not those who are already retired and unsatisfied with their life. Instead, I was looking for the boomers who are young enough to live in the 'populist world' where their life is not yet unwillingly converted into the mode of last generation. And at the same time, they are in the 'third age', a life course not yet fully defined, an intersection of the prolonged middle age and, possibly, the anticipated old age. Differed from the elder boomers, they have slightly more time adapt themselves in searching an appropriate identity of the 'third age'. Hence, in addition to the age segment, the ideal informant should actively search for means to live a better life. For example, different ways to reach their dreams, new services to support them, and breakthroughs that help them remain healthy and energetic throughout their 'third age' and the future elder life. In such way, ALV should be able to learn from these young 'active boomers' and re-envision the future of elderly-care service.

3.3. Second study phase-Data collection

As mentioned, culture influences individuals in the form of collaborative, value co-creation activities facing diverse actors in a multi-dimensional cultural context. The core ideology is soaked into a set of networking activities to produce contextual value contributing to individuals' specific self-identity project. More specifically, customers obtain ideologies and cultural codes through value co-creation activities in service systems. Thus, their perceived ideologies are reinforced by cultural codes and real life experiences, and blended in customers' self-identity. In such way, when decoding the emerging ideology from these active boomers, it is important to encourage them to recall and share their aspirational identity project.

As aspirations can be rather intangible, informants often cannot express their thoughts and emotions literally. I was inspired from Zaltman's renowned brand research technique, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), when designing my data-collection process. ZMET was introduced by Prof. Zaltman of the Mind of the Market Laboratory of Harvard University at end of last century (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995). Combining the assumptions of Knapp (1980) and Damsio (1994), Zaltman and Coulter (1995) consider that consumers do not think and communicate primarily in words. Instead, inspired by Humphrey (1992), they suggest that, as the visual cortex takes up the big chunk of human's brain, consumers think in linkages of sensory information. Following the idea of Lakoff (1990), they further argues that this cognitive mechanism is metaphoric, which is about how consumers create meaning and make sense of the world. So understanding how people think metaphorically opens a window into their unspoken aspirations.

Following ZMET process, the researcher gives informants a broad enough question to think about for two weeks. While thinking this broad question, informants collect non-literal images that express their thoughts and feelings about the broad topic. It's critical that the informants, instead of the researcher, find images and tell the meaning. Because they should select images based on their thoughts and feelings about the topic. In such way, they may reveal deep thought that unable to get in survey or a focus group. During the interview, a series of detailed conversations should be carried out, ranging up to the emotions and identity states that these metaphorical images represent, and down to the specific practices and the products. The collected images serves as probes that stimulate the informants' thoughts and feelings. In this way, the researcher can get data in the form of metaphors, images and emotional states which show how consumer frame the questions over the topic area.

Therefore, inspired by the ZMET technique, before the interview, my informants were given two weeks to select ten images that represent the unique aspirations and concerns of their impending retirement lives (See figure 3.4). The collected images included photos, collages, or paintings, which could be found in paper media or on the Internet. In such way, the identity project interviews in this research were powered by ZMET's image probing interview technique, which revealed a series of aspirational identity projects in the close future. Informants finished their image collections and returned the results via email. Those who haven't completed the image-probing task were eliminated. Finally, 7 informants were selected for the interview phase (See chart 3.2).

Alias	Sex	Age	Occupation	Marriage	Children	Grandchildren
Informant A	Female	50	Housewife	Yes	One	No
Informant B	Male	51	Innovation consultant	No	No	No
Informant C	Female	53	Freelancing consultant	No	Two	No
Informant D	Male	55	Community manager	Yes	No	No
Informant E	Female	55	Marketing executives	No	No	No
Informant F	Female	58	Art educator	Yes	Three	Yes
Informant G	Male	60	Manager	Yes	Four	No

Chart 3.2 The profile list of seven finalist informants (Source: the author)

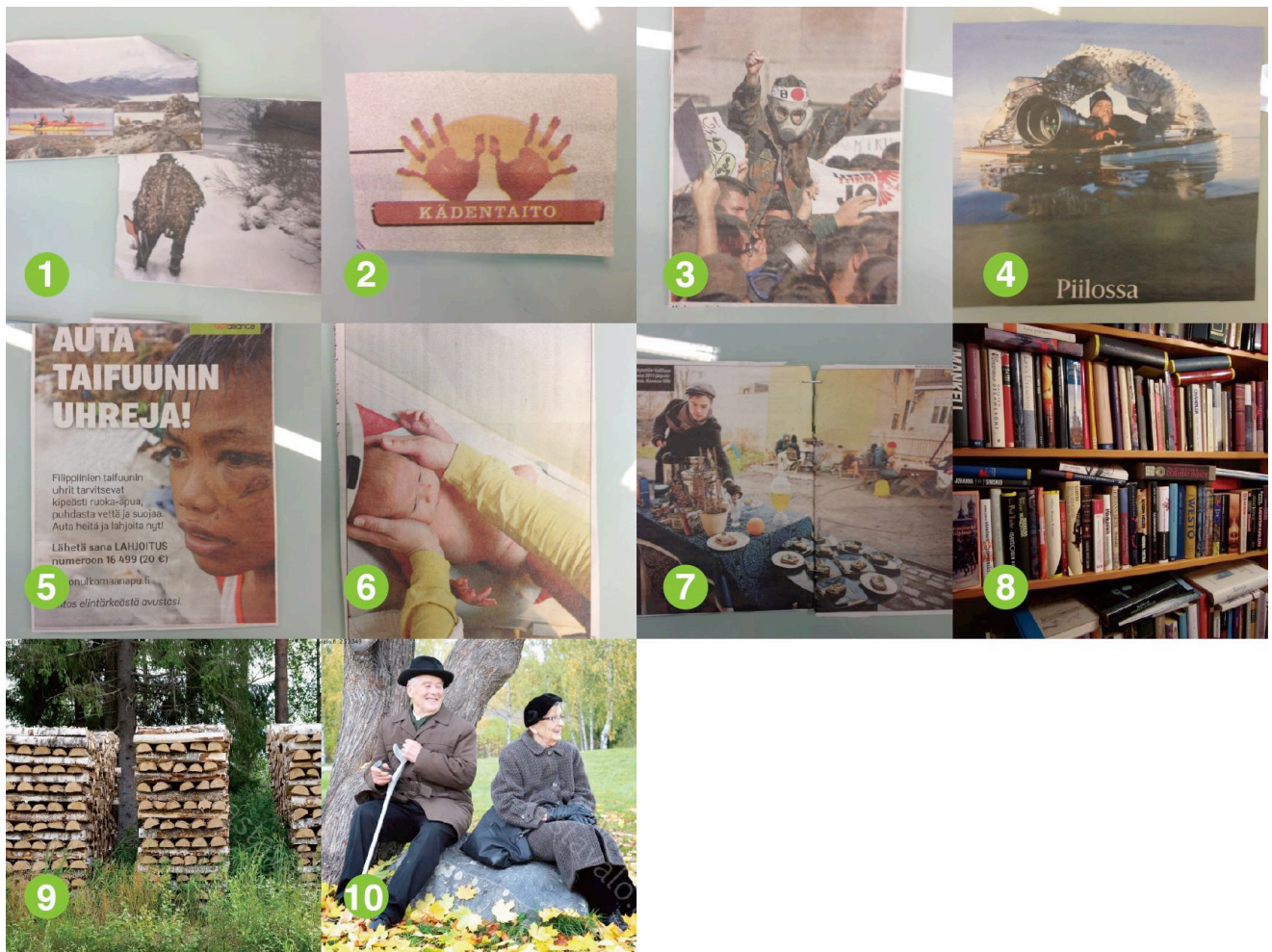


Figure 3.4 Image collection result of the informant G (Source: the author)

Identity project interviews, lasting two hours, were conducted with each informant individually. With the permission of the informants, the interviews were recorded in audio format. During the interview, the informant described the stories behind each image that he or she collected. These stories helped to reveal how the informant viewed him or herself in a specific cultural context practicing certain identity project. Hence, the informant was encouraged to bring rich details to the stories and to discuss each of the following elements of cultural context in each story (the sequence can be nonlinear):

Example of questions for eliciting life stories from informants	To which context components the narrative contributed
What do you think about yourself in this situation/activity?	Self-identity
What is the objective of doing these activities?	Goals (Cultural contradictions)
What tools or means have you used?	Tools/means
What are you doing on this occasion?	Practice/habitus
Who is involved in these activities?	Co-creator
Why it is valuable for you to practice this activity?	Co-created service value
Where did this happen? Can it happen at any other places?	Societal institution/Infrastructure
What is the background story/ ritual meaning of this activity?	Cultural background

Chart 3.3 the checklist of data collection through identity project interview (Source: the author)

3.4. Third study phase Data Analysis

Categorization	Explanation
Self Image (<i>Self Identity</i>)	The role one played (or perceived) in this specific context
Goal (<i>Value Proposition</i>)	The ideological motivation of one's identity project
Means (<i>Tools, Methods</i>)	The items or methods used for performing the ritual practices
Identity-building practices	The procedure and detail activities of ritual practices
Collaborators	The other actors who exchange (cultural) resources in one's self- identity project.
Preserved service value	The co-created value for the self-identity project in specific context of the individual.
Institutions/Infrastructures	The back office of the value co-creation activities
Cultural Background	The acquired ideologies that stimulating or sustaining the individual's self-identity project.

Chart 3.4 *Eight elements of the service context (Source: the author)*

The collected life stories were transcribed, openly coded, and interpreted with the 'service-context mapping technique'. In the service context, the individual integrator 'experiences the emerging value as connected to either his activities or the items supporting his activities or the people he is interacting with' (Löbler & Hahn, 2013, p.255). Accordingly, active boomers' life experiences were viewed through the service co-creation lens and understood within the specific context, which consists of 8 different components (See Chart3.4). According to the categorization system above, raw data is color-coded individually (See Chart 3.5).

THE COLOR CODING SYSTEM

Self Identity**Tools (means, channels)****Collaborators****Institutions/frastructures****Goals** (social tension)**Practices** (ritual practices)**Preserved service Value****Cultural Background**

THE EXAMPLE IMAGE



AN EXAMPLE OF RAW INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

JK: So, let's start with this collage. What does this mean to you?

INFORMANT G: That's something I would like to do now and would like to continue doing in the future. That is related to (the activities I am doing with) my free time. (I like) **Going around into nature.** Going to the **rough places.**

In this picture, you see **a male lamb**, standing **in the middle of nowhere**. He is **determining his own position**. He is in a difficult place, surrounded by mountains, and the viewer may consider this **a stupid animal**, only climbing to **the top of the hill to see what is there.**

This is an image of me being a funny creature. This weird creature in the image is a man. He is one of the most famous Finnish nature photographers. He is in disguise observing animals that are hiding. This image looks like me wearing overalls and standing in peaceful place with heavy snow beside the sea. I could imagine I was at my **summer cottage in the wintertime.**

My summer cottage is located on a small island. It's not accessible over the winter, because the sea doesn't freeze over enough for a person to walk across. But I like to be there; it is a quite pretty and relatively well equipped with electricity and PC and a wood burning fireplace. But there is no heating or running water. Otherwise, it is very modern.

This image is a sculling team. Sometime I like to **enjoy it with company**, a few rounds. **My best friend** has two **canoes**. We have done a couple of **rips on the lakes and rivers together and stay overnight** there. Canoeing is a very pleasant way of getting around. You use the wooden oars. Or, you can carry your canoes if you want to go down to the rock edge. It's a very natural way of moving around.

That is what I would like to be able to continue, and doing more. As I am getting older, I expect my free time to increase. For (activities in) that kind of environment, I would actually invest my time, if possible.

JK: Can you try to use one to two sentences to describe this collage as a whole?

INFORMANT G: **Peaceful, silent, being with nature, connected, earthing (grounding yourself in nature).** The fun of **hiking in the forest** is, you **have all things you needed in your backpack.** You **make the campfire when you sleep** and **make the food to eat.** Next morning you **clean up the place, you don't leave a trace behind.** You **take all your belongings with you and go away.** **It's a feeling of freedom.** It's you and the surroundings, **nobody asking and forcing you to do anything else.** Anybody as a human being, the condition is defined by the **nature, according to it, we make changes.**

JK: Let's synthesize all these a bit.

You want to ground yourself in nature, and have peaceful silence when you are with nature. By doing so, you feel a sense of freedom, as you are **not preoccupied with the matters of your normal life.**

Chart 3.5 Open coding of the raw interview transcriptions of informant G (Source: the author)

Next, with reference to the hierarchy of the elements of the service context map, color-coded data is sorted into a linear sequence to filter out irrelevant data. Below is one example demonstrating the application of this technique.

Self-image	I see myself as a male lamb determining his own on the top of the hill. This lamb might seem stupid for many people (living in the city).
Goal	I want to ground myself in nature, and have peaceful silence when you are with nature.
Means	canoes (flexible); summer cottage in the wintertime (Relatively well equipped; hard to access)
Practices	I enjoy the peaceful silence, being with nature, being connected and grounded in nature. I have all things I needed in my backpack, so I can move agilely without leaving a trace behind.
Collaborator	My best friend
Perceived value	A sense of freedom, as I am not preoccupied with matters of my normal life.
Infrastructure	Rough nature in the middle of nowhere.
Cultural background	Because in nature, anybody is a (equivalent) human being, and their conditions are defined by nature, according to it, they make changes. In nature, I have nobody asking and forcing me to do anything else. I only make changes to adapt to nature

Chart 3.6 Context mapping of the open-coded data of informant G (Source: the author)

The open-coded data is further grouped into "affinity clusters" according to the collective goals of boomers who practice similar identity project in different practices (See Figure. These collective goals indicate the common themes of value co-creation activities – self-reinvention, aging in balance, relationship & home, and passion to serve – that relevant to boomers indicating a series of new ideological opportunities in current cultural context of the 'third age'.

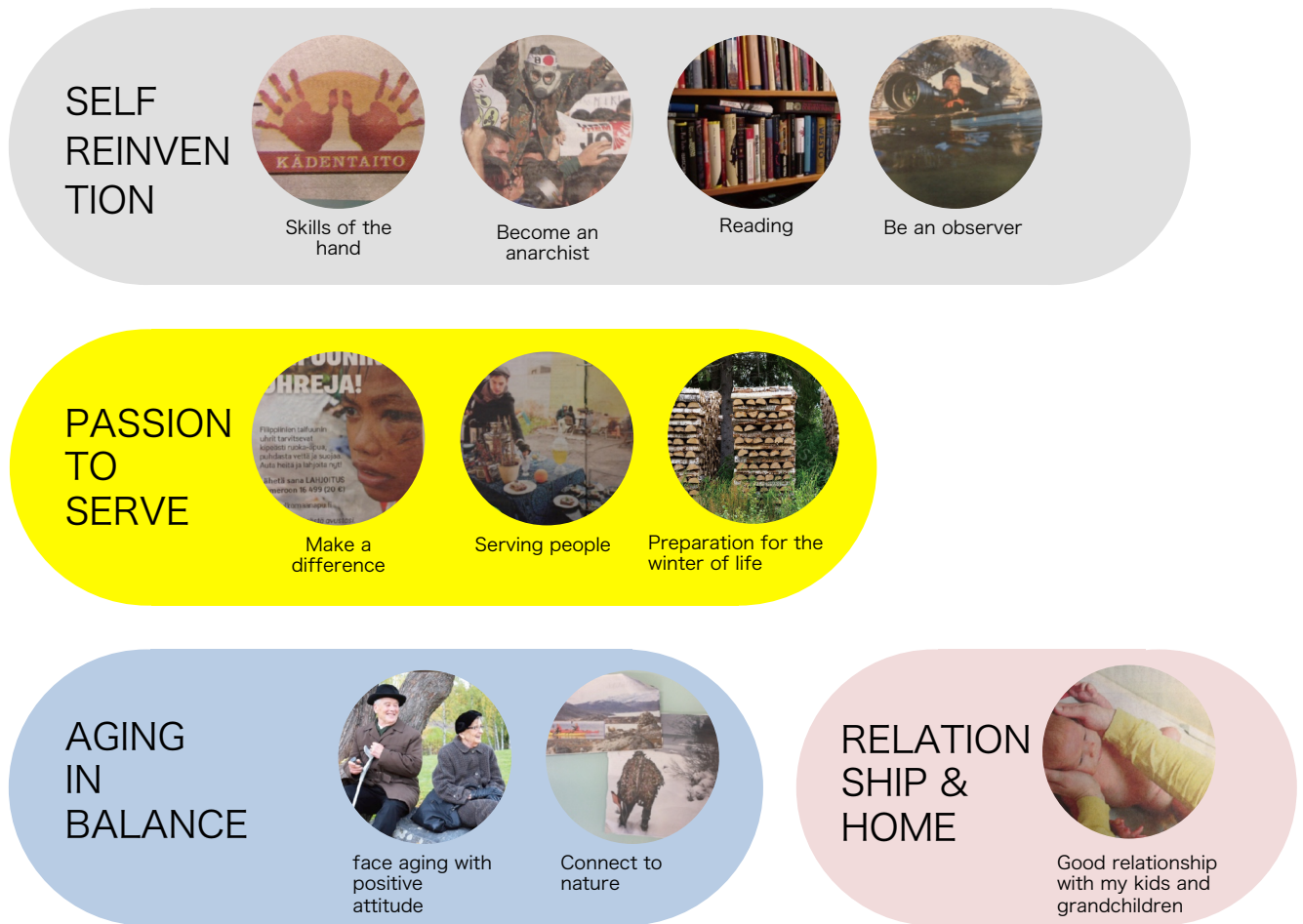


Figure 3.5 Clusters of Identity-building practices of informant G (Source: the author)

After the cluster assortment, referring to the interactional context components, Cultural Background, and Self Identity, I further compared the differences between the collective identity of the third-age boomers and the previous generation. These differences indicate the populist ethos of the active boomers, as well as the prominent cultural contradictions currently pressed on the boomer generation. Firstly, as the most autonomous identity-project, 'Self-reinvention' is a populist ethos that collectively practiced by active boomers to reinforce their self-identity.

In addition, the other collective identity-projects reveal active boomers' desire of reconstruct the cultural context of elderly life from three aspects, the aging status, the relationship, and the social competence. More specifically, to these third-age boomers, the anticipated cultural context of the elderly life is, suggesting a frail, lonely, and valueless life, conflicted from the prolonged cultural context that promotes a forever-young, social and competent life. As different practices were used to feed common identity projects, each boomer's perceived values became fragments that, assembled, created a holistic understanding of the common cultural codes (See Figure 3.6 – Figure 3.9).

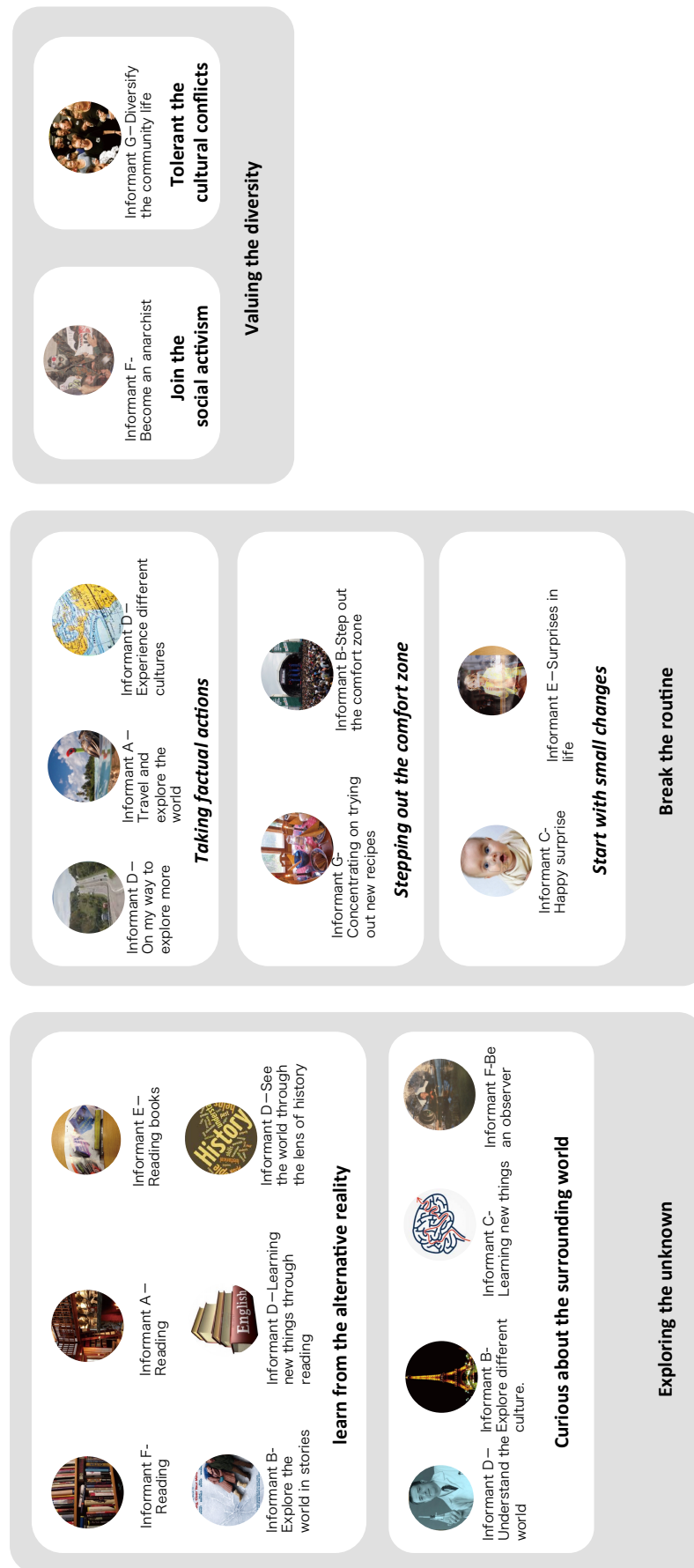


Figure 3.6 Clusters of cultural codes of Self-reinvention (Source: the author)

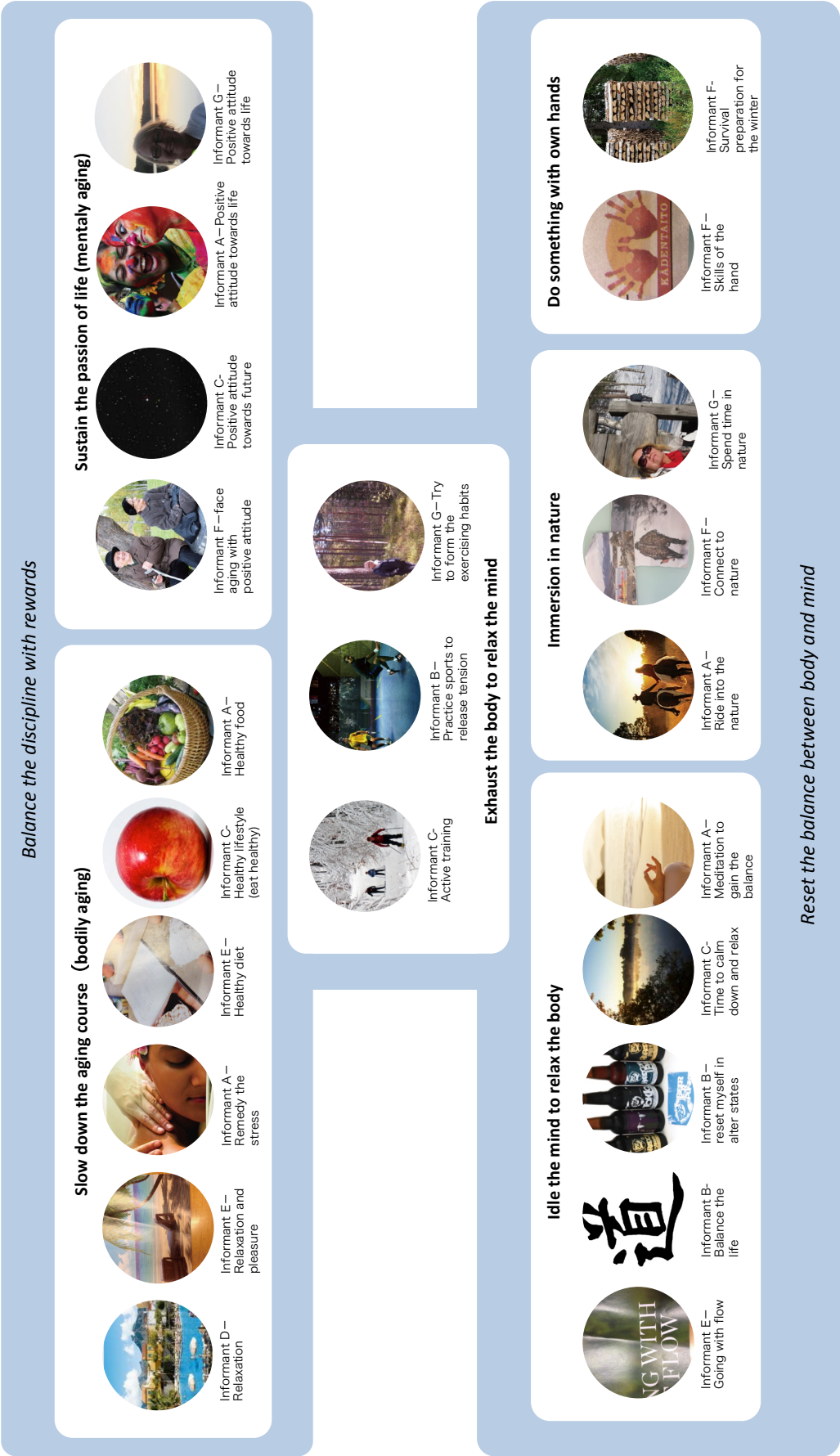


Figure 3.7 Clusters of cultural codes of Aging in balance (Source: the author)

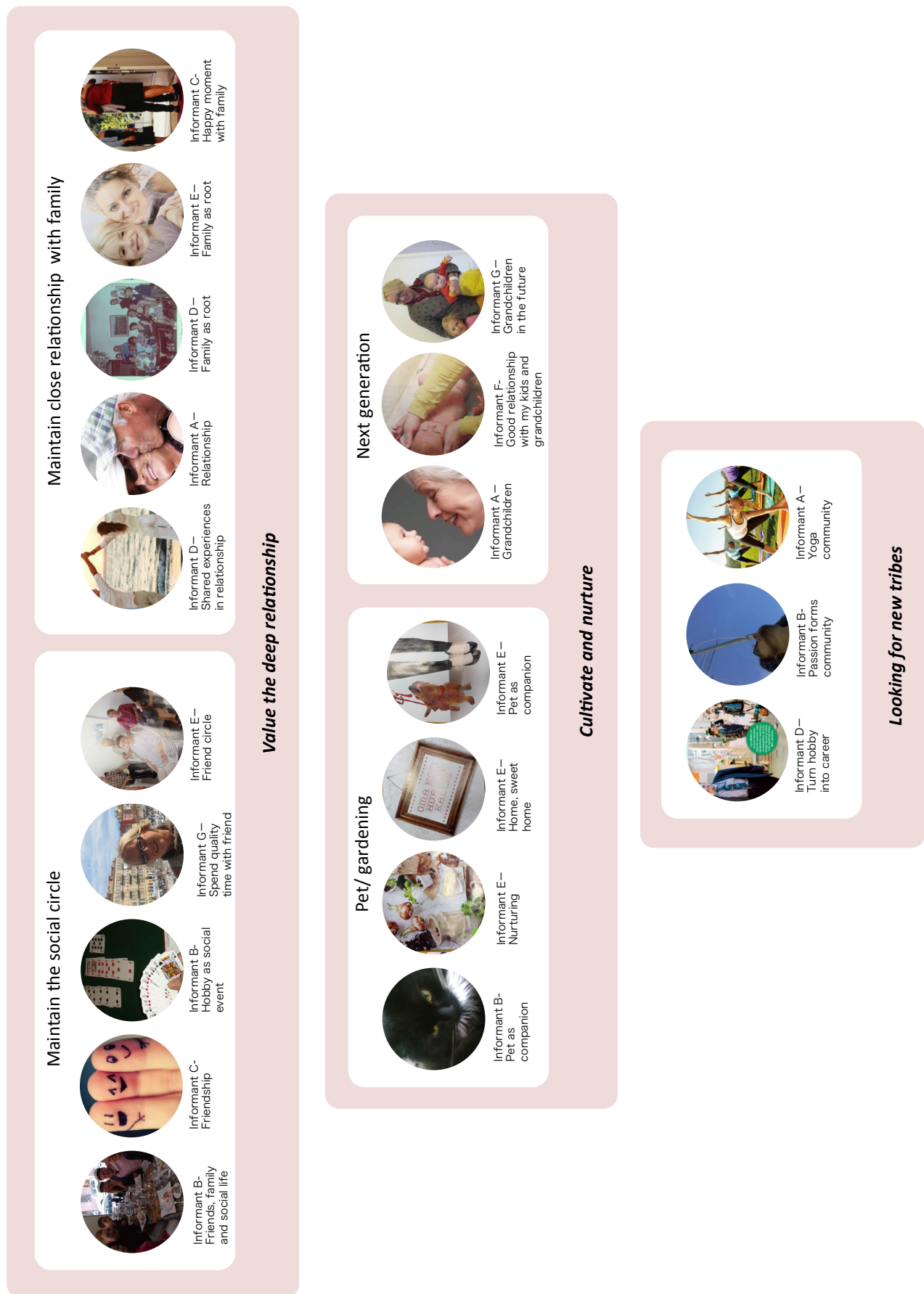


Figure 3.8 Clusters of cultural codes of Relationship & home (Source: the author)

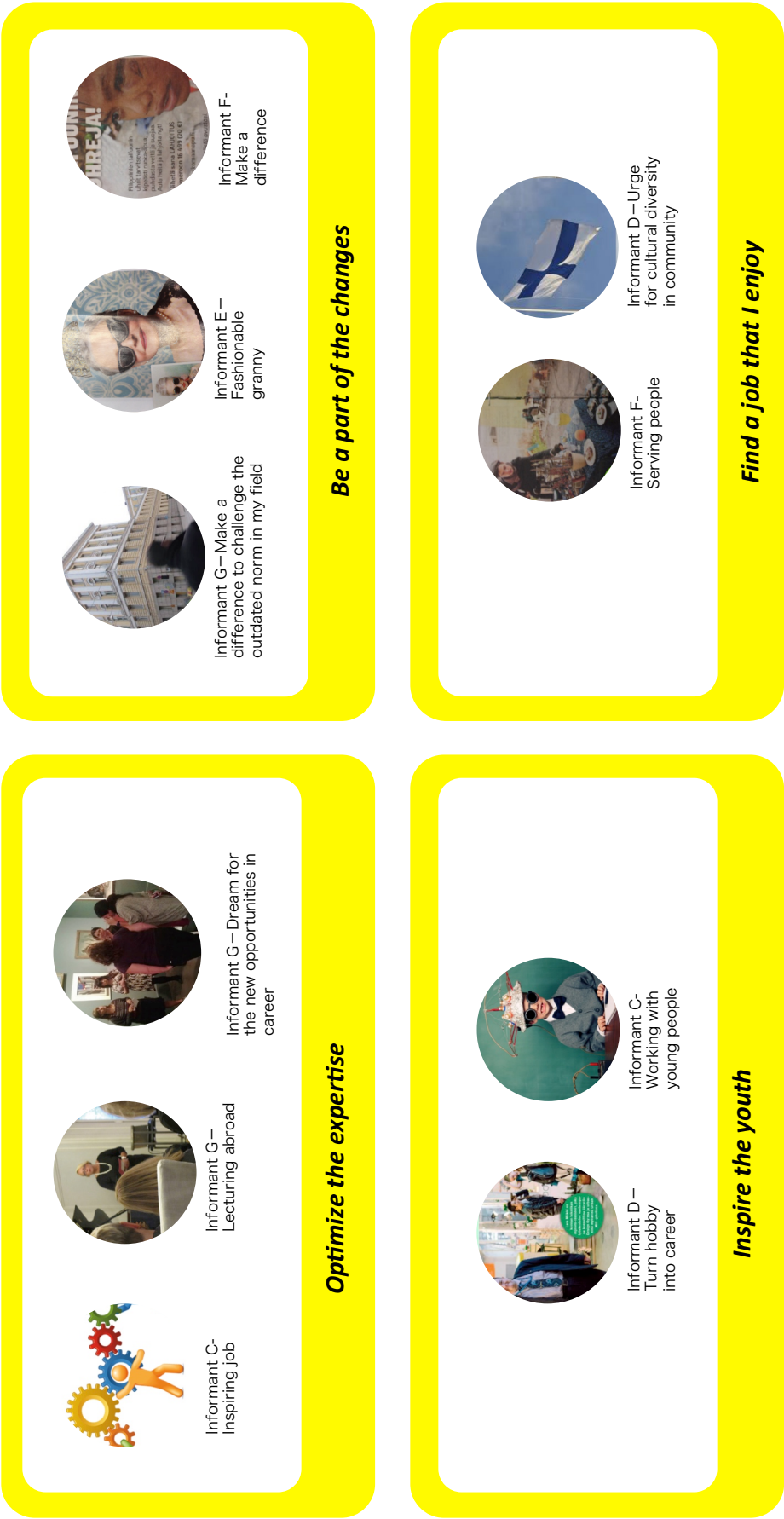


Figure 3.9 Clusters of cultural codes of Passion to serve (Source: the author)

According to the structure listed in Chart 3.7, I synthesize active boomers' reconstruction of elderly life. In the following section, the populist ethos of the active boomer, self-reinvention, is portrayed. The ethos sets the mentality leading to three major reconstructions in the current cultural context of the elderly. These changes tackle three intertwined cultural contradictions in boomers' third-age cultural context. I elaborate these contradictions through the stories I collect from the interviews, and illustrate the opportunities through (aspirational) practices of active boomers. Essentially, I strive to present the relevant ideological opportunities behind these practices, which offer inspirations for reinventing the service context of ALV to accommodate aging boomers.

THE ETHOS OF THE THIRD AGE		
<i>Self reinvention</i>		
CULTURAL CODES OF THE ETHOS		
<i>Explore the unknown - Break the routine - Value the diversity</i>		
CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS IN ELDERLY CARE RELATED CONTEXTS		
Aging contradiction <i>Eagerness of stay young and healthy</i> Vs. <i>Stereotypes of unattractive and frail aged body.</i>	Lonely contradiction <i>Eagerness of enjoy rich social life and family relationship</i> Vs. <i>Stereotypes of lonely social life of the elderly.</i>	Career contradiction <i>Eagerness of sustain the social competence after retirement</i> Vs. <i>Stereotypes of valueless retirement life.</i>
SOCIAL TENSIONS CAUSED BY CULTURAL CONTRADICTION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lose the vigor and vitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feel limited by work-oriented social base - Become empty nest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lose the job as lose the identity
IDEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILD THE NEW IDENTITY OF 'THIRD AGE'		
Aging in balance	Relationship & home	Passion to serve
CULTURAL CODES OF THE IDEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance the discipline with rewards - Reset the balance between body and mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value the deep relationship - Looking for new tribes - Cultivate and nurture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optimize the expertise - Be a part of the changes - Inspire the youth - Find a job that I enjoy

Chart 3.7 Structure of the 'elderly-care reinvention' (Source: the author)

3.5. The populist ethos-Self Reinvention

Juggling from the common identity project-Self reinvention, active boomers would probably not be satisfied if aging stopped them from refining the culture context to serve their life goals. However, as many mentioned staying close to the culture is not easy in the aging progress. Many informants found that, living in this quickly evolving society, the elder generation often see themselves being thrown into uncertain situations. When discussing this perception with informant B, I have been informed by his observations that the older people grow the more trouble they have adapting the new culture. In a way, there is probably a stereotype obtained by many boomers that - the elderly would eventually block themselves out from the evolving world, due to the poor adaptability. Meanwhile, another informant mentioned that the constraint of anxieties, blocking new ideas, is not factually mitigating the perceived tension but leads to more depression. That might be the reason why many elder boomer retirees have been depressed, as they see themselves gradually living empty lives unconnected to the present day, ever changing world around them.

As an illustrative example, Informant C has met many people in her age who are disappointed with their lives. She found that these people have not been able to handle the rapidly evolving world. They have been locked in the past and cannot move forward. I especially touched by one quote from her, *"If they feel that they are mistreated, they can become very bitter. They haven't noticed that they are losing the present and the future, because they are so focused on the past and how things went wrong. In this way, they are multiplying their losses."*

Although each active boomer holds specific goal in facing the changing world, the informants described how they together shared a collective ethos- 'self-reinvention'. These active boomers presented themselves as eager to reinvent themselves to adapt to the uncertainty in life. Aging was not dragging them down into an enclosed life style, but rather enabled them to pursue new adventures. Their diverse identity building-practices reveal three culture codes collectively, which are summarized as: **exploring the unknown, breaking the routine, and valuing the diversity**. These are further explained in the next three sections.

3.5.1. Culture codes 1-Exploring The Unknown

I noticed in most interviews that, all informants are - despite the age, gender, or occupation - keen on exploring the unknown world. To a certain extend, they are almost craving for new adventures that challenge them to think beyond the mundane life. Through the analysis, I found this exploration constitutes two inseparable aspects- **Inspire by the alternative possibility** and **curious about the surrounding world**. The former aspect indicates their exploration of the internal world where they build their wildness dream and passion. The latter aspect shows their reactions to the external world, through which they fulfill their curiosity and develop a connection to the surroundings. Through the exploration, most informants found it gets easier for them to scope and adjust their self-identity. These two aspects are detailed in the next two paragraphs.

Inspire by the alternative possibility

Reading is a shared practice of all informants. As many described, while reading, they recreate an alternative reality in their mind with a unique environment, surroundings, plots and characters. This altered reality gives them access into a virtual adventure in which they revive the lives of other people. It opens new perspectives that they might have ignored. Sometimes, it forces them to reconsider the authority of perceived ideologies. Hence, they can think out of the box and even integrate some new ideologies into their real lives. As Informant E said, 'when I need to make the big decision of my life, I would refer my situation to a character's similar situation and see what they did. It has been a sense of guidance and consolation, when I didn't have anybody to turn to.' Informant E's quote suggests that, stories can inspire active boomers to make a difference. However, these stories should be blended with her real-life experiences, which constitute a context that gives meaning to her practices.

Curious about the surrounding world

In addition to virtual adventures, most informants make even more explorations in real life. They are very curious about the world, so they are constantly renewing their worldview. As informant G told me, that exploration helps him to rationalize the connections between different ideas. Moreover, through these explorations, these active boomers are cultivating themselves to become more adaptive in unfamiliar environments. Hence, they believe that, as I have been told, when facing the unexpected changes, they can calmly reflect and grasp the core of the challenges and avoid feeling in crisis.

3.5.2. Culture codes 2-Break The Routine

As discussed above, **exploring the unknown** frames a rational knowledge base of different cultures. In addition to that, these active boomers have pushed themselves further to break the rational routine so as to embrace the surprises in life. Active boomers are, as many of them said, not only ready, but seeking, for new experience in life. That is not to say they live a chaotic life; these boomers do maintain their own daily routines, as what I found when scheduling interviews with them, which help them to efficiently organize mundane activities. But all the while, they adapt new cultures or habits, so these new things are constantly updating their daily routine. Their routine breaking activities constitutes three aspects — **step out the comfort zone**, **take factual actions** and **start with small changes**. These three aspects compose a loop, through which all informants factually act out their ethos, self-reinvention. These three aspects are detailed in the next three paragraphs.

Step out the comfort zone

Most informants intentionally adapt small changes to avoid becoming numb in their comfort zones. To understand this cultural code, Informant B's story offers an illustrative account. Informant B follows funky music to challenge himself to get out of his comfort zone, as he believes tolerating a sense of danger makes him open-minded. He found that listening to the music of his younger days tended to raise old memories of those younger times. He believes that resorting to always

listening to familiar, older music makes it harder to accept new realities. Hence, he always listens to the music that gives him a sense of the mysterious and even the dangerous.

Taking factual actions

As many informant described, they do not like to make unnecessary delay for making changes but rather embrace it spontaneously. As Informant A found, many people only dream about changing their mundane life. In reality, these people always have excuses to postpone their actions. She said, 'after I started my traveling at the age of 16 I never stopped. I don't plan. I always say that I won't live to the pension age. So, I am not leaving anything for the future. Anything I want to do, I would do now.' Whereas active boomers, like Informant A go straight to actualizing her dreams, and often without a fixed, long-term planning. In a way, for most informants, making changes are not scary. The uncertainties of the result make them enjoy the learning in the process. In other word, keeping the plan flexible make them adaptive in the progress of changes. I found these changes serve as a sense of prototype of their retirement life. The more they try, the clearer they define their vision. As a sense of prototype, these changes do not have to start with radical turn-over.

Start with small changes

As many informants said, routine breaking does not require radical transformation; it can start with changing the petty trifles. As Informant E said, breaking the daily routine is about accepting surprises into one's daily life. Informant E often *walks about new paths that is not taking regularly during her daily commuting*. Usually, at the beginning of each walk, she can feel a bit awkward to these tiny changes. But after she does it, she feels a sense of accomplishment. She said, *'It is like I surpassed myself. I have regained the control of my life. Most people are stuck (in their daily routine). I am not choosing the convenient and easy way to live, otherwise I become a 'programmed machine'.*

Through the explorative practices, I found many informants are cultivating themselves to become more adaptive in unfamiliar environments. Hence, when facing the unexpected changes, they may calmly reflect and grasp the core of the challenges and avoid feeling in crisis. Carrying out the routine braking activities, these active boomers are expanding the dimension of their life to experience richer life adventures. Therefore, I found that many of them have successfully avoided being stick to the endless repetitions of the same behaviors. In addition, while acting out the populist ethos, they reinforce their self-identities.

3.5.3. Culture codes 3-Valuing The Diversity

The behavioral reinforcements make active boomers confident, so they are more open-minded towards alternative ideologies. They attentively improve their tolerance of different opinions, so that they expend their horizon in facing a new culture. Active boomers value the diversity, which is not only make them **tolerant the cultural conflicts**, but even give some of them the eagerness to make difference in the society, for instance **join the social activism**.

Tolerant the cultural conflicts

Many informants regard their social community as a small society where different opinions should be tolerated. To understand this cultural code, Informant F's story offers a good account. Informant F has been singing in choirs for fifteen years. Two years ago, a young director took over the choir. This new director brought in a very different musical style. When the new taste changed the traditions, it sparked conflicts. Many old members quit, because they did not like the change. Informant F had been wondering if she should leave as well. She eventually decided to give herself time to reflect on the changes instead of rejecting them right away. Her tolerance paid off. She soon found the changes to be not only acceptable but even beneficial. *She said, "I enjoy more this days than earlier days. The current music we sing is modern music, which belongs to this era. This new type of music is connecting (younger and older) people."* As Informant F told, the revolution in a small community can be an epitome of bigger societal changes. Behind the tolerance of diversity, there might exist the desire of joining social activism.

Join the social activism

More than toleration of the diversity, some informant even reveals a strong rebellion towards the dominant culture. As informant G said, he desires a cultural diversity because it may speed up the change of social structure. Informant G believes that diverse opinions are the richness of humankind. He said, "Disagreeing and having conflicts may not be easy, but it is necessary." Informant G said he has missed belonging to a group activist that expresses strong opinions against the mainstream culture. Many informants agree that everyone should have the freedom to express what he or she really means. They do not have the superstition of authority, because, they believe there is no right way of thinking. As such, some active boomer believes the social activism is the ultimate statement of art, because likeminded individuals can align themselves to resist the officially 'right' ideology.

Informant G's case might appear extreme, but it suggests a possibility that boomers might want to join the social activism speeding up social changes, as the current social environment and the civilized world do not fulfill their needs. That is to say, the brand that acts as cultural artist might be desired to lead the social activism.

3.5.4. Potentials of incorporating Self Reinvention in ALV's brand

As discussed, many boomers might have obtained an idea that aging process can decrease elders' ability to adapt to change. Thus, they may believe that when elders stop adapting, they would fall back to routines from earlier days and into a mindset susceptible to being fed by old ideologies. In general, I found the active boomers interviewed in this research refuse to cling to old ideologies. Instead, they are actively reinventing themselves to adapt to the changing environment. That is to say, they believe the chance of having a second life in their gold years. As such, they are purposely cultivating abilities that allow them to interact with the changes in their lives. Active boomers persistently determine to push boundary to its limits, with a sense of authenticity, their strong wills become energized.

These active boomers' mentality keeps them actualizing their aspirations in reality. Emulating their mentality may inspire ALV help other boomers to practice the 'self reinvention'. More specifically, ALV might accommodate other boomers to change their behaviors for gaining the value of sharper mind, healthier physique, richer social experience and extended value in an engaging service context. In order to do so, ALV could learn from these active boomers to grasp how they perceive and create value in their practices of self-reinvention and corresponding context reconstruction. Then, ALV could use these insights to define the value propositions for other boomers while designing new service. These cultural insights, especially their context reconstruction, were synthesized into three ideological opportunities—**Aging In Balance, Relationship And Home,** and **Passion To Serve**. Seizing these opportunities, ALV might break the cultural orthodoxy in elderly care sector in collaboration with aging boomers. For that reason, ALV might be leveraged as an appreciated cultural artist who leading the 'elderly-care reinvention' in Finland.

The following sections of this chapter elaborate these three aspects of 'elderly-care reinvention'. In each sector, I first explain the acute social tensions from where these essential ideological changes rooted. Then these changes are detailed by the cultural codes interpreted from the identity projects of active boomers. Finally, each sector is summed up with the rebranding suggestion for ALV according to these ideological changes.

3.6. Aging in balance-Reconstruct The Aging Status

The boomer generation seems to never want to quit the mentality of 'Forever young' (Karisto, 2007). Many boomers may strive to push back the benchmark of physical aging, as many urban legend portrayed, now 'fifty is the new thirty.' Many of boomers may have their aging course delayed significantly, thanks to the rapid developments of medical and cosmetic. However, gaining age, like time, is one thing that affects us all. As this generation approach the edge of senior life, a cultural contradiction is growing more obvious. How to celebrate a grateful second act in their elder age, if the essential means to experience the life, their physique, **is gradually turning unattractive and frail**? Due to this contradiction, either directly or indirectly, some informant has portrayed an acute social tension, especially when they find themselves **losing the vigor and vitality**. **This cultural contradiction is described as follow.**

3.6.1. Culture contradiction-Losing The Vigor And Vitality

Aging, as a phenomenon, has multiple dimensions, which often leaves a gap between chronological age and cognitive age (Muller & O'Cass, 2001). For example, many American boomers, their perceived age can be fifteen years younger than their real age (Leventhal, 1997; Muller & O'Cass, 2001). At the climactic phase, boomers may experience a decline in physical capacity, which can mismatch their younger cognitive age. When this mismatch is not well treated, it may develop into a serious identity crisis. Because it is difficult to realize that one is not as 'young' as they thought they were.

As one informant found, while aging, many boomers (especially women) can become anxious about their looks. They feel that they are turning **unattractive and invisible**. That is hard, especially if they have always been good-looking all their life. Informant E told a story about her female friends who have been through this identity crisis. She said, *'I have some gorgeous friends who always have men going after them. They have used to a life where they always get special treatments, because of their charming looks. When that identity is gradually disappearing, it could be really hard to handle.'*

This kind of identity gap is not just about fear of losing youthful figure; it also occurs when one notices **a weakening physique**. As informant B told, people can get very frustrated and angry at this stage, especially athletic men who always were competitive. Informant B shared the identity crisis that his father went through: *'some years ago, he stopped playing tennis after once he thought his tennis partner gave him an easy pass. He was so pissed that he stopped playing altogether. He thought it was a humiliation. He thought the opponent pitied his aged condition. He has not done any exercise anymore since then, except walking.'*

However, compare to the physical decline, the fear of aging is more attributed to the **fading vitality**, which drastically increase the cognitive age. In a way, these active boomers want to live not survive, which makes the cognitive aging more worrisome. As Informant A said, the elder life should at least be full of spirit if not able to maintain the vigorous figure. Informant A said she is not afraid of chronological aging, but rather the loss of positive attitude caused by the cognitive aging. This concern was firmly embedded after she witnessed the lifestyle transition of her friend who lost mobility due to chronic disease. She describes her 54-year-old friend (pseudonym of **Anne**) as an

empty shell living a lifestyle like someone in her 70s. *'Even my mother in law, who is 70s, is much more active than Anne. When my friends invite Anne to an exhibition or dinner, she always has to say no.'* Informant A said with a sense of pity, *'Anne's illness causes many pains in her back. Hence, she is not so interested in moving around, which I do understand. However, I cannot bear to behold how her attitude is trashed by the illness. She has lost her interests in searching for the pleasure in life.'*

As discussed above, loosing the capable physique is surely a fear, but many informants found what even worse is loosing the **vital force** that motivates a person to desire the better life. The generation of boomers have always been value the self-expression and individual needs (Karisto, 2007), which urges them to contend for better life. In that sense, the worst nightmare for them might be when they have to bare both the **frail physique and dependent life**. Many informants consider that, as another explanation of why many elder boomers find they have no bright future, the care home is perceived as such a terrible place where the elderly are kept alive.

For instance, Informant A always thought the food in care homes was good, as it is supposed to be nutritional food. However, when she visited her grandmother in care home, she found the food there processed and tasteless. These foods reminded her 'hospital food' offering only nutrition, but no pleasure in eating it. She was shocked that her grandmother got used to this 'mistreatment' so quickly. *Her grandmother is so used to being indoors and fed with tasteless food. Eventually this old lady does not even want to go home when given the opportunity. This made informant A strives to avoid that someday she will become one of the numb elderly, like her grandmother, who lost the vitality and live without desires.*

3.6.2. New ideological opportunity-Aging In Balance

The obtained social tensions, like the declining of flexibility, could have been seen as stimulations of lifestyle changes. However, lacking handy means, many boomers may not be able to effectively manage health status in their aging progress. In fact, due to the young cognitive age, I assume some boomers may remain careless about their health status, as if they are still in 30s, even after they gain symptom from their ignorance. In addition, their prolonged middle-aged lifestyle, like working overloaded, may overly consume their vitality. This unhealthy lifestyle might add up the difficulty of lifestyle changes, as they need pamper themselves, for the sake of lessen pressure, and resist the discipline. That is to say, Boomers might lack the means to create context that sustaining a disciplined lifestyle changes.

On the contrary, I found most of my informants seek or even create context for reconsider the different pace of the aging of physique and spirit. And more specifically, their daily practices, aiming for a balanced pace of aging, are sustained in particular context through value co-creation. Generalizing the ideology behind their context reconstruction activities, a new ideological opportunity has emerged. I call this opportunity 'aging in balance', which is constituted with two major culture codes: On one hand, they **balance the constrained discipline by rewarding**. On the other hand, they **revitalize through balancing the physique and mind**. By doing so, they

decompress the accumulated social tensions of aging. These two cultural codes are elaborated as below.

3.6.3. Culture codes1-Balance The Discipline With Rewards

Through my interviews, I found most of these active boomers are willing to change the lifestyle so as to enjoy more in their second act. However, they often cannot be bothered to follow the generic 'healthy recommendations' that suggesting contextless lifestyle changes. As many informants said, they do not know how much they could trust medical recommendations that keep changing all the time. Often, these tips are not able to offer precise suggestions in daily care for proactively coaching the lifestyle changes. Moreover, these suggestions are usually not for reaching better status, but for preventing the current status going worse. In short, I found that maintaining current status is not always appealing to these active boomers because it cannot provide enough evidence to prove the value of lifestyle changes.

Informant A was in a lot of arthritis pain since her late 40s. She has been actively looking for better means to cure the diseases, but the western medication was not able to meet her need. As she said, when consulting western doctors about her symptom, they often suggest her to give up smoking and drinking. 'But I never drink nor smoke', Informant A complained when she told the story that, these doctors not only give her irrelevant suggestions but also more medicines to cure the side effect of the taken one. 'That's ridiculous,' as she said. This situation has not been over-turned, until she received a personalized recommendation from an Ayurveda doctor, after she relocated to indie with her husband. Following the personalized instructions (five things to add and five things to avoid in daily diet), she learned to appreciate healthy diet and frequent exercises. She made changes, which have helped her feel less disoriented. Informant A feels she has gained 'a lot more energy.' Even better, she feels she has purified her body. *Because of all these changes, after four years of using medicines, Informant A gave up the medicine addiction in 2010.*

Through Informant A's story, I found the change of lifestyle is a long and difficult journey. Even the active boomers would still need balance the discipline with rewards to stick to a healthy diet and enough exercise. On one hand, bodily decline, as a kind of discipline, reminds them the importance of good health. However, more importantly, these disciplined practices should be 'rewarded' for the positive changes they can create. These lifestyle changes are enough beneficial for Informant A because her enhanced condition is directly perceived as her rewards. While, it is difficult to urge the 'healthy' boomers to make changes in their life, as they need to take extra effort in finding a clear goal and indicators.

Informant F have been used to a sedentary lifestyle. As she grows older, she becomes more aware of the deleterious consequences of sedentary behaviors in humans. Although she has the determination, it is still not easy for her to habituate the changes. As she said, *she is a bit lazy sometimes, and the first step is particularly hard her to take when going out for sport. Therefore, sometime she has to force herself to walk outside.* Fortunately, despite of lacking the direct bodily indicators of changing her lifestyle, Informant F still found few means she successfully used to promote habits meant to maintain, which is listed as below:

Firstly, Informant F tracks data so as to turn the obscure motivation of daily exercise into a quantified objective. She feels more active when she uses the step counter, because she knows that if she walked 8000 steps that day, then she has reached the goal. Data tracking concretizes her goal, so she can get a sense of fulfillment when the daily goal is accomplished.

Secondly, Informant F attaches a side goal or treat to the main objective. As she loves nature, Informant F is curious to see plants and animals in nature too. So she sometimes takes a camera with her when she is hiking in the forest. The side goal or treat should be the instant reward that is concrete and easy to approach.

Thirdly, Informant F creates a context for recognition and self-expression. This context can be found from the help of family and friends, as Informant F said, her husband helps her a lot when she is less motivated to go for exercise. Because when they are going together, Informant F gets more fun from sports. In addition, Informant F also gets this context in social networking activities, as she mentioned, she likes things with music, and she likes choreography, so she considers dancing could be more fun for her. In an even broader sense, Informant F is also influenced by cultural background. When she was in NY, she found everybody walks in the city for a very long way and very fast. She noticed that it was magnificent, and also she tried to walk in town like others. Thus, Informant F can sustain her habits easier when inspired by the recognition she gains from peers or the community, as well as the different culture.

As discussed above, I found that, to form lifestyle changes, boomers might need **rewards to balance the discipline**. Their body could naturally indicate this kind of rewards, if they follow clear instructions to improve unsatisfied conditions. Even if without this direct indicator, they can still **find other indicators, in existing or new cultural context, to determine the value of lifestyle changes**. In this way, boomers can form a bond between actions and rewards, so their behavioral changes would be evidently valuable in particular life context. It makes the habit easier to form.

3.6.4. Cultural codes2-Reset The Balance Between Body And Mind

As the deterioration of bodily functions is inevitable, as many informants agreed, maintaining the vitality and young spirit is critical. Living in a hectic environment today, boomers are surrounded by much more stimuli than the generation before them. Moreover, as many active boomers remain working or expect to extend their working life, they might also gain stress from their work. As Informant B said: "[being overwhelmed] is a norm." Living under the constant stress may excessively consume the vitality of boomers, which cannot be recovered naturally. As *Informant B described, one may feel exhausted all day, because his/her body is reacting to the overwhelmed brain, and it cannot recover from sleep. Sometimes when one has too much stress, it can creep into his/her dreams.*

Most informants believe they can be revitalized through resetting the balance between body and mind. This balance state is considered as the basis of everything else. To explain this, Informant F made a good metaphor, "It is like actor resetting himself for a new play, he let go of his role and start from zero. For me, everyday is a new play. The old me is left behind, but I should move on and

relate to others with positive attitude.” To a certain extent, this kind of reset is viewed as reaching a Flow state where one focuses only on him or herself at that moment. In another words, they regain the balance between physical and spiritual existence. There are quite a few different identity-building practices to achieve this balance status, which listed as below:

Exhaust the body to relax the mind

Informant B believes an old saying that, “when your mind is tired, you should work your body. And if the body is tired, you should work your mind.” When Informant B reaches tough place while playing squash, he may forget the time and space. He said that he *never feel stressed during a sports event. Because he is giving all his energy away, there is not enough energy left for him to worry about anything.*

As many informants told, the exercise can be very intense as long as it is not causing pressure. In other words, exercise should not consist in competing against anybody. Informant A believes this kind of exercise should be able to practice at her own pace and concentrate on how she feels. She said, *‘I often do yoga with my eyes closed. So I am just in my own world, doing my own thing and focusing on how I feel and where my body wants to go on that day.’* Therefore, Exercise, especially those less competitive ones, can set some active boomers’ mind free, as there is no need to pretend a better performance.

Idle the mind to relax the body

It is crucial for some active boomers (especially introverted ones) to be alone. They like to meditate, walk alone, or just sit at home and do nothing. Informant C considers the quiet moments help her to idle her ‘overly excited’ mind so that she can get revitalized. *When she is meditating, she finds herself mindful about the changes happened to her. And she does not deny those changes. Instead, she welcomes it.* The world may throw different things at people, both good and bad, which one cannot always resist. When meditating, some active boomers can quit fighting with the world but rather accepting changes with grace. In other words, practices, like yoga and meditation, help some active boomers focus on the moment and let go the pain of the past and concerns of the future.

Immersion in nature

As a crossroad generation, Finnish boomers have a strong identity connection to nature (Kari, 2007). They enjoy the peaceful silence of nature and like to ground themselves in nature. To many informants, immersion into nature alters the environment around them and removes them from the pressures of the working life. Informant G prefers to invest his leisure time in experiencing his existence in the rough nature. He feels a sense of freedom, as he is not bonded with the stuff of my normal life. *As he said, in wild nature, he is free from societal obligations. Instead, he only makes changes to adapt to nature.* Coincidentally, Informant F is almost all the time, in the summer, swimming in the natural lake. She found it is a kind of catharsis to immerse herself in the nature, which *makes her feel healthy and free.* Thus, some active boomers appreciate their tight bond with

nature, through which they collect the positive spirit to lessen their stressful body and soul of the urban city.

Do something with own hands

To some informants, thinking and working with physical objects, to leave milestone of one's life, is also seen as a very effective way to balance the mind and body. Informant G finds himself gaining a sense of existence when doing practical and physical thing with his own hands and getting the concrete results. Said Informant G: *'It marks the physical evidence of my past, so that I can see how things changed as time goes.'* Handicrafts help Informant G to concentrate on the object in his hand. Hence, the attention is transferred from the hectic mental life to the delicate craft. This kind of practice is not restricted to handicraft; it could simply be fixing a broken part without buying any extra spare parts, digging a ditch, cleaning the house, or building a snow castle and seeing it melt away. That is to say, though, in a highly developed market like Finland, most service is available, some active boomers still prefers to improve their life with their own hands. In found this is an identity influenced by their childhood context in agricultural society. In other words, this kind of practices is not for making anything economically worthy, but rather for an experience of solidifying the intangible time in crafts.

3.6.5. Potentials of Incorporating Aging In Balance Into ALV's Brand

Many boomers have long been embedded with the concept of forever young, and they have strived to maintain a youth figure and mentality. Without proactive adaptation to aging, many boomers might fail in sustaining their young cognitive age when the factual symptoms of chronological aging hit on them in a sudden. On the contrary, some active-boomers found their way, aging in balance, to determine values of balancing the pace of the aging physique and mind. Learning from active boomer, ALV's service can be transform into self-motivated prevention programs designed to minimize health risks with a focus on coaching the long-term lifestyle changes. In addition, through this service, ALV might want to help boomers preserve a positive attitude toward life and fill their identity gap.

3.7. Relationship and home-Reconstruct The Relationship

When talking about the relationship and social life, many informants perceived loneliness is another known stereotype that casts shadow on elderly life. Although they regard themselves naturally shy and quiet, but social life is still considered as a big indicator in the aspired future of most informants. However, the eagerness of richer social experience is not automatically achieved. Without preparation in advance, some boomers may face a cultural contradiction, as they could experience a strong sense of loneliness after retirement. As many informants mentioned, the social life of Finnish boomers are often restricted in work-oriented social base. In addition, as their adult kids moving away, some informants became empty nester, and this may not be rare case. Approaching retirement, the potential of **losing social ties** as well as **waving good-bye to their kids** may cause deep and sudden loneliness and cast major social tensions on the lives of the aging boomers. These two cultural constrictions are elaborated as bellow.

3.7.1. Cultural contradiction 1-Losing Social Ties

According to the descriptions of many informants, above many things, career has been the component by which boomers value themselves and compare themselves to others. Some of them are devoted to their work and almost live to work. Due to the economic depression, they found their working life is becoming more demanding, which make it more difficult for them to have rich social life. Additionally, as some informants mentioned, for some of their elder relatives, work was their only social context and they mostly socialize with work colleagues. Thus, these informants have strived to avoid a restricted social cycle. Lastly, the social medias has eaten up the social life in real world, which many boomers found superficial.

Informant A recalled the time when she started working 20 years ago, and said: "Back then the economy was booming, and people were not stressed out about losing their jobs." However, these days are gone. As she said, working life has placed much more pressure on her peers in recent years due to frequent layoff and new knowledge demands. "They have to be multi-taskers to keep their positions, and they are counting on their jobs, as they do not have enough savings to afford an early retirement", said informant A. In such sense, a demanding job can cause people to be too tired to socialize after work, further reducing their social lives. As many informants said, this situation is especially true in winter. When the night is long and dark, they often lose interest in any extra social life after work.

As noted by Informant B that, many boomers do not have many social contacts other than those they made during their career. Informant B worries about his social life when he sees how his older relatives have lost theirs: *"I see my old relatives, some way or another, losing the nearest friends. It might be they died, or they changed."* In Informant B's student life, he makes many friends, and many of them last for a lifetime. However, the further he goes on in his professional life, the more he uses his energy for work instead of for meeting new people. As he said, *"It turns out that friends can just vanish as they moved abroad or die. If I am not renewing the base, I am losing them (his friends) as their life (social) circle is less attached to mine."*

In addition to that, meeting old friends is also getting more difficult, because “everyone is so occupied with his or her own job and family”, as many informant addressed. Informant A’s expression might be a bit extreme, but it does reflect the difficult social situation: *“If they are working, to get two or three of them together could take six months planning before we get a night that everybody can do.”* Trying to adapt themselves to contemporary social norms, many trendy boomers use online social networks to meet people. However, the current social network platforms do not satisfy some informants’ social needs. As told, it is really difficult for Informant A to organize real face time. That is why she is on Facebook. However, she found people on social media pretentious and shallow. Informant A felt sad about that, *on Facebook, people pretend to be cooler than they really are. And she, as well as many other informants, is not interested in the overloaded rubbish on Facebook, like what someone has been eating in the morning.*

3.7.2. Cultural contradiction 2-Waving Goodbye To Their Kids

Secondly, the cultural contradiction also comes from the potential of become empty nesters. After retirement, as the focus of life is moving away from career, some informants become more enthusiastic in nurturing their social relations. However, some of them have encountered social tension caused by a big void in their family life. Most informants said that they have been independent since young age. Accordingly, some made their life choice of later marriage and fewer children than the last generation. Hence, for some informants, their retirement might meets, precisely, the moment when their adult children move away, which makes the home suddenly become quite and empty. Not to mention, some informants might have no child, or even no partner.

Many informants considered themselves always been quite independent. As their parents were working daily, these young boomers needed to take care of themselves starting at school age. A Finnish term describes these ‘boomers’ as ‘Kids with the key around their neck’ – in other words, children who had to let themselves into their homes (with the keys) after school because their parents were still at work. This habituated independence carries on into their later lives. In Finland, families grew smaller after the baby boom. This dropping fertility rate was at its lowest point in the Seventies, as boomers were the first generation in which women “postponed having a first child, and who had a variety of birth control methods available” (Sutinen, 2011). Thus, compared to the previous generation, many Finnish boomers, like most informants, have small nuclear families.

As boomers, like many informants, have fewer children than their parents, more attention was given to their children. Some boomers might spent a lot of their private time with the family, which is also a possible reason why they have less time to extend their social circle. As Informant C mentioned, she used to send her children to their hobby group, or facilitate a birthday party for them, or accommodate their friends visiting them at home. There were activities all the time around her. She found herself did not have any time of her own. In such way, when the adult children left home, some boomers may lose a big part of their family life. When this situation comes along with retirement, it intensifies the lack of social life. For instance, Informant C has experienced a strong sense of emptiness after her last child left her home.

3.7.3. Ideological opportunity –Relationship And Home

As discussed, boomers may obtain an acute social tension caused by lack of social life in their retirement. However, it seems difficult for them to extend the social circle in advance. On one hand, their work-oriented social base restricts their social life. On the other hand, they are facing the potential of becoming empty nesters. In addition, many boomers made their life choice to have no kids or even never marriage. It is foreseeable that, for them the anxious of nurturing relationship can be even stronger. In general, I found many boomers might lack the means to nurturing their social relations and family ties.

Most informants, like normal people, value the deep engagement in relationship. What makes them different is, instead of blocked in the existing social network; these active boomers intentionally extend their social cycle. Rich social experiences are considered as an important component of the future life of these active boomers. It reveals a new ideological opportunity in elderly care. I call this opportunity 'relationship and home', which is constituted with three major culture codes: primarily, boomers gain a sense of belonging and courage to explore the world from **deep relationship**. Then, carrying this courage, they seek and join new community to **extend their social cycle** to likeminded people. In addition, they also find means to fulfill the void of family life through **nurturing and cultivating**. By doing so, they satisfy their eagerness of rich social experience. The three cultural codes are elaborated as below:

3.7.4. Cultural codes1-Value The Deep Relationship

As many informants mentioned, typical Finns do not have a large base of social contact. They tend to enjoy a few deep relationships rather than having a range of casual friends. Those relationships offer them a sense of belonging and security. Informant B has been noted that, it is important to be loved, because it gives a person confidence and faith in the future. In such sense, some informants believe their close friends are the most important "coffin bearers" who carry them through life. Informant D made a vivid metaphor describing the importance of this deep bond with close friend and family. He regards himself as a tree; if he has no strong root, he would fall down when reaching out too many branches. Almost all informants have expressed, to some degree, they value the spiritual connection in friendship. Their closest friends are usually long-term and deeply bonded. With them, they share life experiences and support each other going through difficult journeys. To certain extend, these collective experiences, rather than blood relation, bond the boomers to their close ones and ground them when they seek to expand their social context.

3.7.5. Cultural codes 2-Looking For New Tribes

To avoid losing their social life after retirement, some informants have strived to develop multi-networks and communities throughout their career. For some informants, communities could act as a rich source of their identity projects. Besides collectively practicing similar identity-building activities (e.g., yoga), communities co-create other values. For instance, Informant A learned a lot of alternative medicine from her Yoga community, which encouraged her to change attitude toward unfamiliar cultures. As Informant A described, she has been learning all the time from the other people in the yoga community. This learning was more than just the yoga moves. The other members were sharing their life experiences, like the new alternative medicine and acupuncture

they have tried. Informant A had always been scared about the needles. But since somebody in her yoga community tried it and loved it, she developed courage of trying it one day.

Informant D is one of those active boomers who enjoy the sense of community. He is the co-founder of the multicultural community 'Urban Mill' and an active participant in five other communities. He thinks the active involvement in multiple communities is a critical investment for retirement. *As he said, 'a second plan' should be developed for the retirement. So he would not lose 'everything' if he just becomes detached from his work.* Informant D, as a community-building expert, shared his experience about how to reconstruct his social networks. Firstly, he noted that one should be spontaneous all the time, and should not think about whether he can get anything out of the time he invested in the social activities of the communities. Secondly, he stressed on the importance of using a separate schedule for the social life, and trying to invest time on that outside the work life. Thirdly, he emphasized that one should never put on airs in the community. Instead, he should make jokes about myself. Fourthly, He stated one should try to build a connection between the communities. In such way, he can bridge more people who have a mindset different from each other.

3.7.6. Cultural codes3-Cultivate And Nurture

After the adult children moving away, the parenting instinct of some informants persists. Many of them are counting on grandchildren to give them a second chance to enjoy the sense of 'cultivating.' When Informant A envisioned her life 5 years ahead, she said, "probably my adult son will not need me, but my grandchild might. I believe there is a lot of love to give, and I think children need that, as well as my knowledge and life experience." As Informant A noted, many boomers' role is changing from parents to grandparents, which may alter their ideology on parenting. Firstly, as many informants mentioned, they enjoy being grandparents more, because they can play the role of 'cultivator' without the obligation of discipline the grandkids. Secondly, as grandparents, they aspire to leave a positive impact on the early stage of their grandchildren's life, so the third generation could have good memories about them in the future. As the grandmother of two grandsons, Informant F said the most important mindset of being a grandparent is: "being a helper" who share time to their kids when assistance is needed. That means boomers should avoid intruding on the parenting task of their kids, especially, not criticizing on their children's parenting style.

Despite the willingness to spend a lot of time with their grandchildren, some informants are mainly on their own most of the time. Some have their children living abroad or in other cities. It is not feasible to meet the grandchildren frequently. Hence, finding alternative ways to ease the craving to nurture becomes the new norm. Many informants start to raise pets and see them as their new loyal friends. The pets provide necessary companionship and fulfill boomers' eagerness to play the role of a 'nurturer', said Informant E: *'I do not have children. But I would like to nurture something. Maybe it is plants, maybe dogs and something like that.'*

3.7.7. Potentials of incorporate *Relationship and Home* into ALV's brand

As discussed above, there is a collective expectation among the informants to maintain good friend circles and social activities after retirement. In addition, they also aspire to express their need for 'nurturing' and 'cultivating', while moving the attention away from their career life. These imply that ALV should extend its service domain to cover the social aspect of life. The reconstruction of relationship is adding a new element in elderly-care that helps pre-elderly to maintain a healthy social life and expand to new dimensions. Additionally, as some boomers' might crave for family devotion, I suggest that ALV draw attention on helping boomers to nurture and to cultivate so as to develop a sense of self-worth.

3.8. Passion to serve-Reconstruct The Social Competence

As Finnish status bureau (2011) noted, many Finnish boomers are not well prepared for the transition from work to retirement. Economic depressions, corporation layoffs, as well as the unclear future of public elderly-care have raised the anxiety of financial insecure. Additionally, as mentioned by many informants, boomers tie their self-identity strongly to their career, which make the retirement also emotionally hard to accept. Many informants are eager to sustain the social competence after retirement, which is culturally contradicted to their stereotypes of valueless retirement life. In such way, they perceive an acute cultural contradiction- Lose the job as lose the identity.

3.8.1. Culture contradiction – Lose The Job As Lose The Identity

As discussed, for a generation who identified themselves so tightly with their jobs, the social-emotional aspect of retirement is as critical as the financial. Some informants need their jobs to fulfill the purpose of their lives and will not abandon themselves in pleasure and leisure time. Therefore, it is not an overstatement to say that when some boomers lose their jobs, they lose their purpose and identity. Informant B said he would probably go crazy if he will not able to work anymore. That is because of that, as he said, if he can just do whatever thing he want all day long, he would consider his life not happy anymore. As he said, one needs the Monday to have Friday. If there is no hard working, then there is no full relaxation.

Informant B's words has outlined the importance of job to the Finnish boomers. When I asked the reason behind his opinions towards retirement, Informant B shared a story about his parents' very different experience after retirement which vividly illustrates the culture contradiction that can occur in a Boomers' early retirement phase:

Informant B's father was a well-respected private consultant. His career was his trophy and source of self-value. Unfortunately, the foundation of his identity crashed the day he turned 65; his customers all rejected him that very day, because 65 is the official age of retirement for Finnish male employees. All his clients were states institutions that prohibited recruiting people over retirement age. After he retired, he was seriously depressed for two years, because working was such a large part of his life. All social contact with his customers stopped. He could not go to work but did not want to stay at home. He has gradually drawn himself into alcohol for consolation. Informant B said his father has other friends and his hobby; he even had a band. But it was not enough for him. Informant B found his father had a huge void inside his heart.

On the contrary, a 'bridge job' made a big difference in the early retirement of Informant B's mother. Informant B's mother was a dermatologist in a public hospital. One day, she was notified that after she turned 65, the hospital would not direct patients to her anymore. This news was a shock to her, but she was fortunate enough to have time to develop a Plan Thanks to her connections, she managed to get a part-time job in a student health center before she had to retire from the hospital. She has been working there happily and may stay until she turns 69. This 'bridge job' has made a big difference in her adaptation to retirement. With a longer transitional phase, In-

formant B's mother had more time to ease through the culture contradiction after her retirement, which gave her not only additional financial security but also a sense of confidence.

Informant B's mother is a good example of those who made a good transition for retirement. However, not every boomer will have the same luck. As informant A mentioned, compared to decades ago, the current job market in Finland is much harder for job hunters over age 50. According to the employment law, employers must pay more for an employee over 50. Some informants also mentioned the existence of ageism in career market, which causes workers over 50 to be considered too old to be qualified for a long-term commitment. Thus, job-hunting may also be more difficult for boomers without special skills.

3.8.2. Ideological opportunities–Passion To Serve

According to Informant B's story, I found that without careful preparation before the retirement, some boomers might suddenly lose the ground upon which they build the self-worth. That is to say, they may *obtain an acute cultural contradiction caused by lose their career identity. However, it might be difficult for them to find the remedy of this lost of social competence. On one hand, not everyone have the luck to start a new career. On the other hand, this social value cannot solely regain through alternative social activities. In general, some boomers might lack the means to fulfill their passion to serve the society and extend their social competence accordingly.*

Many informants believe the retirement is a new adventure. As they noted, the worst thing one could ever do with the pre-retirement plan is to “dream about the retirement itself.” Doing so means that when a boomer does actually retire, he or she has no goal left. Older generations, as many informants describe their parents, tended to view retirement as the destination of their long career journey. When they reached it, they could finally wind down. For the boomers, like most informants, retirement can be seen as the ‘second act’ where they wind up for their new journey. When aspiring the future life, all informants are enthusiastic about the opportunities where they can make impact and create social competences. This mentality reveals a new ideological opportunity in elderly-care. I call this opportunity ‘passion to serve’, which is constituted with four culture codes: firstly, active boomers initiatively prepare themselves to winding up in the second act. For instance, they **optimize the expertise, inspire the youth and join a part of the social changes**. On the other hand, they explore the way to **combine their hobbies into career opportunities**. By doing so, they reconstruct their social competence and enjoy the second act with a passion to reinforce their self-reinvention. The four cultural codes are elaborated as below:

3.8.3. Culture codes 1-Optimize The Expertise

For many informants, when starting a new career life, they usually starts the search in the familiar domain mastered throughout years of work experience. They are looking for something that they cannot stop thinking about or that may feel unfinished. In addition, sometimes, fresh perspectives can help these active boomers searching for a second career. Informant F works in the only foreign art museum in Finland. As she cannot find many colleagues with whom to share her thoughts, she takes all chances to meet people from other professions to express her opinions. This helps her broaden her view of her own profession. Moreover, she even found a new passion and started her Ph.D. in her early 60s. Combining her expertise with new technology (experience,

knowledge), her work became more efficient. In addition, Informant F's cross-disciplinary experience has turned her into the cultural ambassador that bridging collaborations among art education institutions and museums.

The accumulated experience of some informants can help them cross into a different market segment or even an entirely new industry and enjoy applying their expertise in a new field. As *Informant C said, she thinks it is scary to find oneself doing boring work year after year and eventually retiring with no dream and no good memory.* That explains why she resigned from her stable job in her early fifties and become a freelance consultant. Now, she applies her IT expertise in change management projects, where she usually works at exiting projects. She describes her transformation as risky but worthwhile, as she finds more passion in what she does.

3.8.4. Culture codes 2-Inspire the youth

Many informants found they appreciated working with young people who can help others to understand their passion and make them feel alive. Many as well said it would be exciting to become one of those inspiring mentors. As *Informant G said, he thinks the purpose of life is to continue it. Thus, he consider it is important to pass on good things and to give them further to someone so they do not go away after his death.* Everything they have physically and emotionally experienced, these active boomers want to pass on somewhere as part of their purpose. *Informant E found her always loves to share her experience with young people. She often hopes these young men would be as enthusiastic and curious as she have been.* Thus, it is very likely that, many boomers might want to give hope and support to the younger generation. As knowledge enables people to be aware of the world, the exchanges between generations leverage both the elderly and the youthful. Many informants also want to keep up their pace with the youngsters. They learn from their children or younger colleagues about how they see this world, what their value is, what is important to them. These exchanges might be important for many other boomers, because they might want to see how the world is changing and be one part of the changes as well.

3.8.5. Culture codes 3-Be a part of the changes

Most boomers I interviewed are planning a long-term project that fulfills their passions. As follows, I just mention some to illustrate this point. Informant F wants to add a new dimension to the current evaluation criteria of Art education. Informant G wants to work voluntarily abroad to help refugees rebuild infrastructure after earthquakes. Informant A wants to become an entrepreneur introducing alternative treatments in Finland. Informant D wants to bring cultural diversity to Finland through his community work. Thus, as described above, being a part of the changes makes them active and allows them to use their life experiences over and over again to help others. As many said, the change they make need not be large; it just must be meaningful. Even a small contribution of something about which they feel passionately is an important driver for active boomers.

3.8.6. Cultural codes4- Find a job that I enjoy

Just like many informants expressed, they just want to enjoy doing the work that they are really interested in. They do not want to take a boring job to earn money for supporting their hob-

bies. Thus, the new career for them does not necessarily have to be a conventional job with monthly payments. This second job is more like a lifestyle where they can mix their lifetime hobby and inspiring work. It is a career that allows them to make and share great changes together with other people. Informant D considers himself lucky as he managed to actualize his dream in his second career: "It is so cool that I can turn my hobby into my job, which is rarely happening among us." As his hobby is to 'explore things' and 'meet new people,' he can have both in his community work. As mentioned earlier, the job does not have to be a full commitment. Informant G satisfied his passion for serving by arranging events for people new to the town. Informant G has the passion of experimenting with food or drinks and enjoying good company, so he decided to serve people in his 'back yard.' He serves dinners or similar events on certain days every year, like first of May, or a pre-Christmas party. He is planning to continue and extend these kinds of events in a ritual fashion after his retirement. In the future, he will welcome travellers to visit his home and enjoy the food, drinks and sauna.

3.8.7. Potentials of incorporating Passion to Serve into ALV's brand:

With increasing lifespans and advanced health care, many boomers may have the chance to start a second-career life in their golden years. As discussed, a well-prepared transition to retirement could be a critical component of a boomer's wellbeing. It is a growing cultural contradiction, because for many boomers a smooth transition to retirement is not always easy. This situation becomes even more intense as job hunting seems more difficult for aging boomers. Thus, boomers might want to use support to plan their bridge jobs to ease the tension of the impending retirement. Thus, ALV could make effort on helping boomers to reconstruct their social competence through service participation.

4

PRESCRIPTIVE STUDY

CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP

Carrying the purpose of transmute the cultural insights, I have learned from the active boomers, into brand strategy, on January 15th, 2014, I hosted a three-hour workshop entitled 'The Future of Aging Care: Explore the new dimensions of elderly life of the boomer generation' at Urban Mill, Espoo. The workshop is served as the second step of the design process- prescriptive study. I propose an agile brand planning process for ALV following the co-design approach. More specifically, a co-design workshop is conducted to gather ALV's executives and designers under one roof to collective envisioning the brand strategy.

I took a collaborative perspective because SDCI approach cannot follow the same old brand development process. Traditional brand development often starts with research conducted by a third-party brand consultancy. Then, the report goes through several internal departments before reaching the top manager that initiates, or the creative vender that implements, brand strategies. The brand management process often becomes bogged down by overhead and overinflated projections. Instead, SDCI approach requires empathic understanding on the part of company executives. Field research results cannot simply be condensed into a formulaic research report. Moreover, instead of outsourcing the strategy-planning task, the executives should be personally involved in the development of the strategy. In such manner, this workshop aims to verify the practicality of incorporating cultural insights into ALV's brand strategies. This accomplish through simulating the cultural contents co-creation process aiming for a reconstruction of the cultural context of elderly-care to accommodate boomers.

4.1. Overview of Co-design workshop

The prescriptive study employs the 'world café' technique (see www.theworldcafe.com) as a general guideline for the workshop. World café is an accessible technique for building vital networks that foster cooperative conversations among diverse groups. World café is based on the assumption that people are inherently equipped with all the creativity and insights they need to conquer obstacles. Set up with the proper context and the focal point, the café workshop can provoke the intrinsic talent of the informant to solve most difficult questions. The participants of 'World café' are grouped in small teams, and each team was assigned a different theme topic and task. During the workshop, the teams shift themes for several rounds. When the team returns to its original theme, participants may examine the topic from multiple perspectives, empowering them to create coherent concepts. This method encourages natural yet powerful dialogue, through which people exchange and incorporate diverse ideologies and cultural codes to make new cultural creations.

More specifically, this workshop, powered by World café technique, is about to simulate the cultural contents co-creation process that aims for the reconstruction of a cultural context. In this process, participants are considered equivalent facilitators and integrators of cultural resources (i.e., ideology and cultural codes). When one team converges with another, a small-scale cultural contents co-creation is reproduced. The inherent cultural resources of each theme are eventually internalized into coherent yet diverse expressions of the concerns and aspirations of aging boomers in Finland. Hence, the teams are able to produce strategies infused with context-reconstruction practices that accommodate aging boomers. The objective of this workshop can be broken further into three parts:

To set boundaries for the workshop to focus on evocative design themes while still making sure to embed the ideation with diverse ideologies and cultural codes.

To immerse ALV's executives in the cultural context of active boomers, so they can reach an empathic understanding of the context reconstruction of the elderly-care for aging boomers.

To transfer the empathy into comprehensive service concept scenarios that inform the context of the service system in which proposed context reconstruction are co-created by boomers, ALV and other stakeholders.

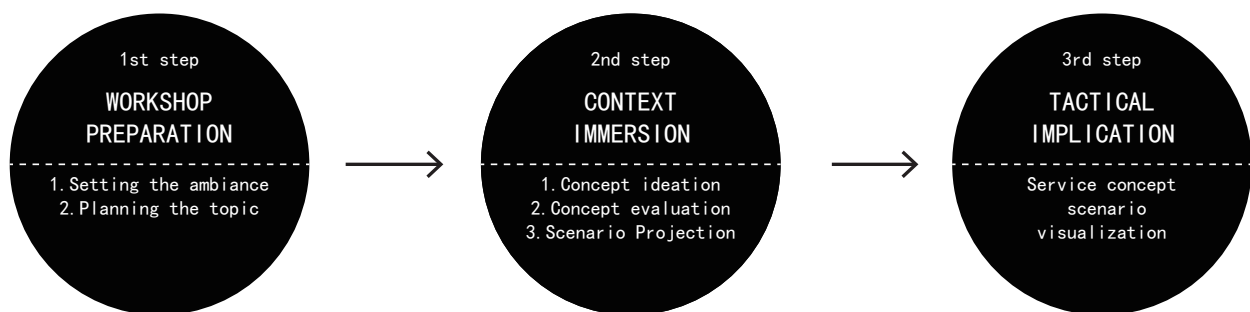


Figure 4.1 Three-phases protocol of the co-design workshop (Source: the author)

For planning and facilitating the Co-design workshop, the detail protocol was drawn from the scratch of basic World café procedure. In reflection to the workshop objectives, the procedure breaks down into three phases. In the first phase, I carefully embed the cultural insights into workshop props to set the boundary of co-design activities. It follows by the second phase where the participants were immersed in the cultural context, and use the empathic knowledge as the base of proposing new service. Finally, in the last phase, the service concepts were transferred into actionable strategies that lead ALV's product developments and marketing activities. The following sections detail methods adopted in this three-phase protocol.

4.2. First study phase-Workshop preparation:

Before the workshop, much effort was invested to set the right context for co-creation. In this first phase, as the workshop coordinator, I have two main tasks to accomplish, which are setting the ambiance planning the topics.

4.2.1. Setting the ambiance

Firstly, as most experienced 'World café' hosts recommend, the workshop should take place in a welcoming space. In such place, the participants will not be afraid to be themselves. They should be encouraged to think freely, speak confidently and listen patiently. Therefore, the physical environment and the warming-up section of the workshop should contribute to creating a hospitable atmosphere. In addition to that, a set of workshop materials should be designed according to the

results of Descriptive study I so as to inspire the participants. For instance, before the ideation start, all the informants watched a video clip of the conversation between a couple facing middle-age crises. They discussed the question - 'why middle-aged boomers tend to be depressed about their impending life'. Through the discussion, the participants prepared themselves for the main topic of the ideation- "How might we develop meaningful Wellbeing services that empower people aged 50 to 60 to make the most out of their transformational life course?"

4.2.2. Planning the topics

Secondly, in order to effectively introduce the cultural insights - the populist ethos and three major context-reconstructions commonly practiced by boomers – three theme posters were formulated to link the insights to the co-design tasks. When drafting the design questions of the posters, three main criteria should be adapted, which listed as follow:

- The ideal questions should be open-ended and difficult to answer with simple, black-and-white responses.
- The questions do not suggest straightforward solutions or allow informants to 'take sides' on an issue. They should arouse curiosity and diverse possibilities.
- Try to draw out the key participant on his or her feelings about the initial questions to test whether the questions sustain their curiosity and concentration.

4.2.3. Outcome of Workshop Preparation

According to insights gained from the cultural inquiry, I have emphasized on context-reconstruction in composing the design theme. That is to say, ALV should propose new service context in which boomers can adapt to and express the ethos of 'self-reinvention'. Through the study of active boomers' identity projects, I revealed ideological opportunities in three context-reconstructions relevant to ALV's brand renewal. These opportunities can be used as the base of composing value propositions of new service context. Thus, I incorporated them into the design themes of the co-design workshop, which are elaborated as bellow:

Theme 1: Aging in a balance

For active boomers, keeping their aging progress in balance is essential. In such a balance status, boomer retirees will less likely hindered by the past, and cultivate a stronger spirit to face the future. To detail this ideological opportunity, I break it into four evocative questions along with the corresponding quotations of the active boomers. These questions and quotations are listed as bellow:

How to balance the physical and spiritual maturing?

I want to maintain my physical youth without worrying the aging consequences.

It is a bit embracing exercising in gym where people are why much younger than me.

I want to be fashionable, but the trendy fashion is for young people.

How to cultivate a new life style that balances the work life and leisure time?

I don't have that much social activity out from my working life.

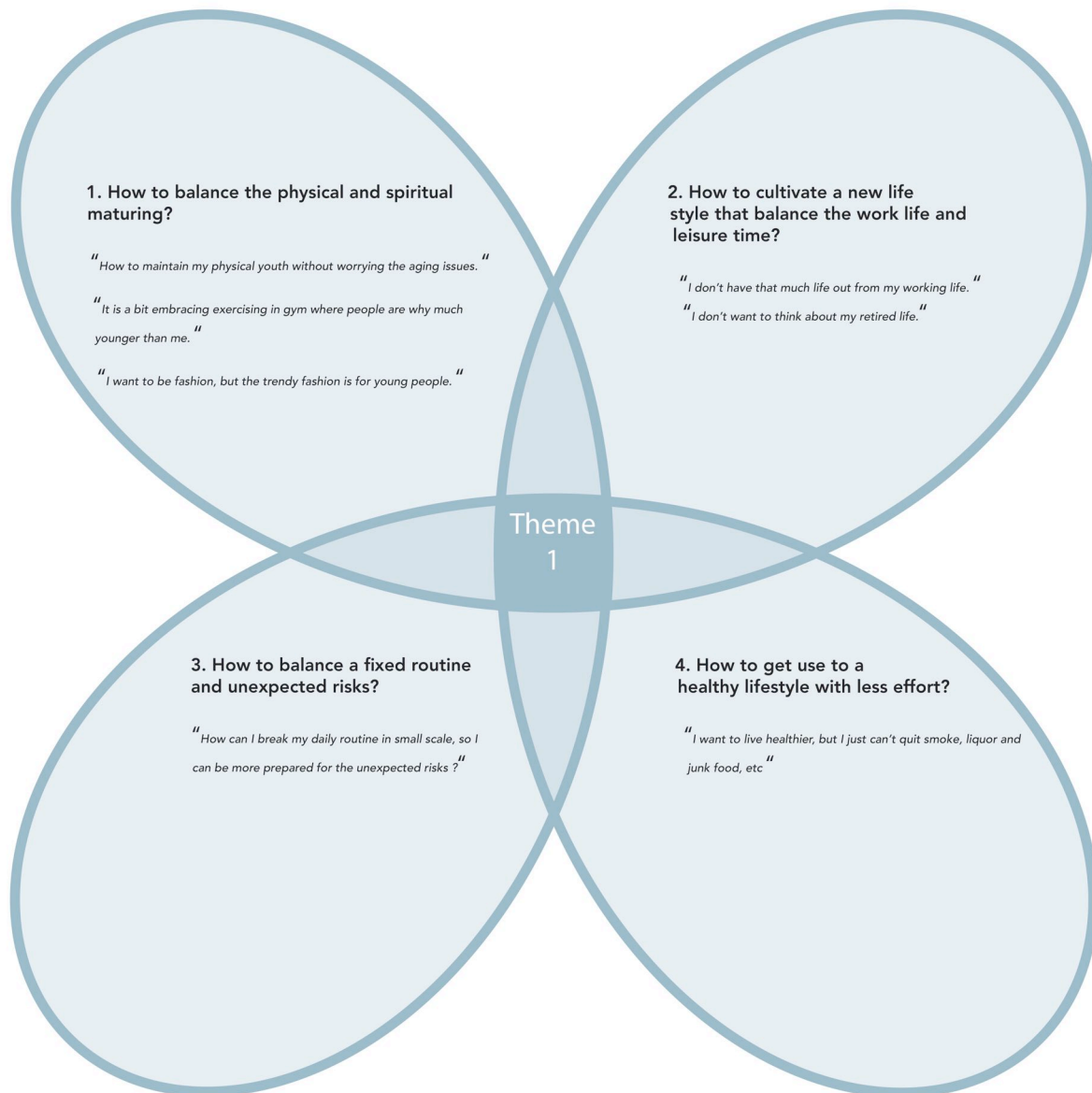
I don't want to think about my retired life.

How to balance the accustomed habits and unexpected changes?

How can I renew my perceptions, so I can be more prepared for the unexpected risks?

How to get use to a healthy lifestyle with less effort?

I want to live healthier, but I just lack the determination to quit the sedentary lifestyle.



Theme 1: Aging In Balance

Figure 4.2 Theme poster - Aging in balance (Source: the author)

Theme 2: Passion to serve

Active boomers aspire to use their knowledge (or hobby) to connect them back to the ever-evolving society (community). For Finnish boomers, career is an important source of self-value. Thus, it would make a significant difference if boomers were able to start their second act with a new career. To detail this ideological opportunity, I break it into four evocative questions along with the corresponding quotations of the active boomers. These questions and quotations are listed as bellow:

How to start a new hobby?

*Limited by my physical condition, I can't continue some of my old hobby any more.
I don't know how to start a new one.*

How to use my hobby (specialty) to serve the others?

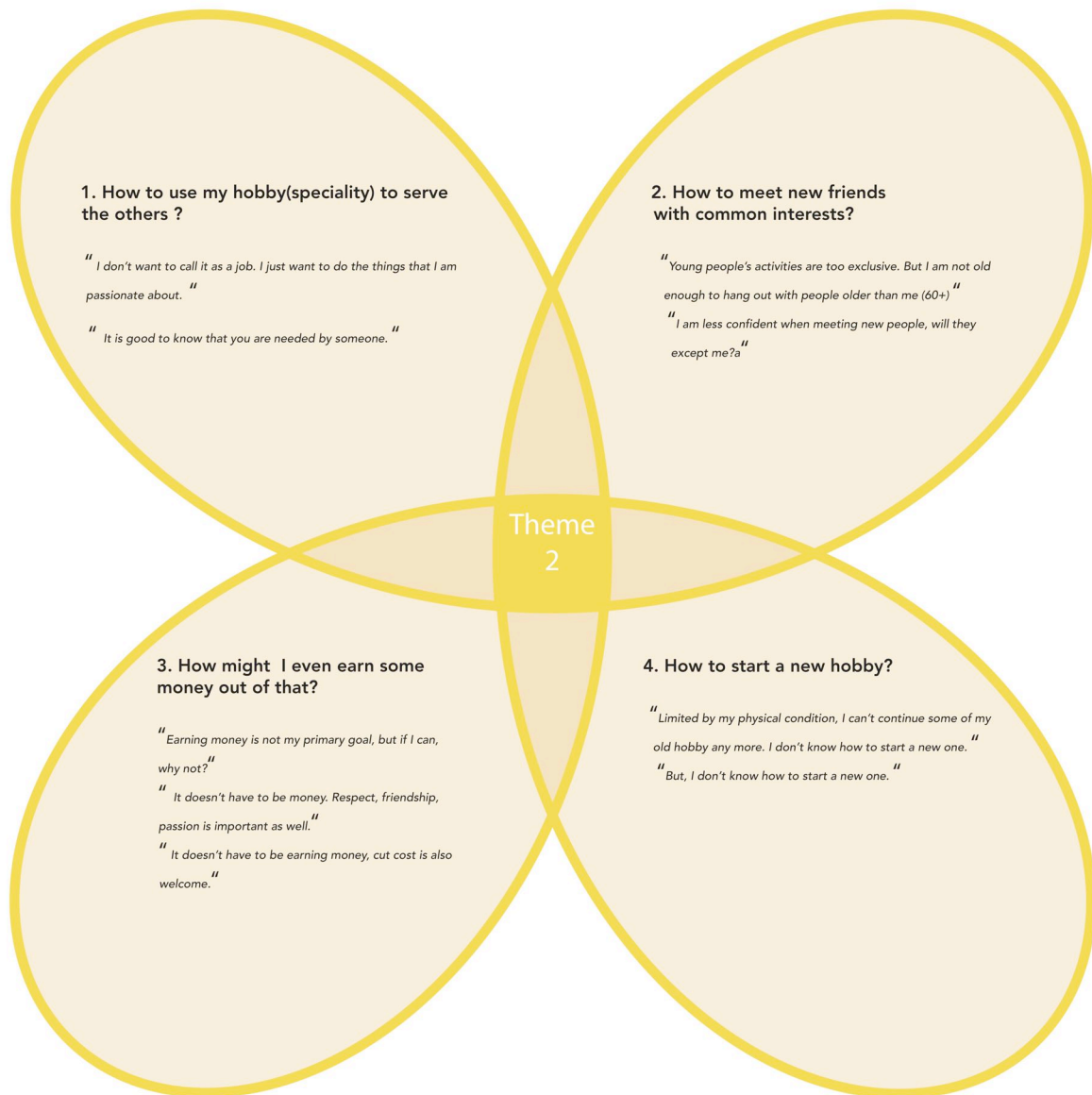
*"I don't want to call it as a job. I just want to do the things that I am passionate about."
"It is good to know that someone needs you."*

How to meet new friends with common interests?

*"Young people's activities are often exclusive.
But I am not old enough to hang out with people older than me (65+) "
"I am always interested in meeting new people, but will they accept me?"*

How might I start a new career?

*"Earning money is not my primary goal. I want to serve others, and it is good to be needed."
"My service doesn't have to be financially compensated.
Respect, friendship, passion is equally valuable."*



Theme 2: Passion To Serve

Figure 4.3 Theme poster - Passion to serve (Source: the author)

Theme 3: Relationship and home

Relationship with the closest social circle and family members are important to active boomers. These people and things secure them by offering a sense of belonging, thus, they feel safer to explore more possibilities to reinvent their life. To detail this ideological opportunity, I break it into four evocative questions along with the corresponding quotations of the active boomers. These questions and quotations are listed as bellow:

How to capture the happy moment in my family/ life.

"I usually do not have time to look my photos after I took them."

"Now with Facebook, people's life just appears superficial to me."

"I do not want to post all my life online, but if I don't, I usually forgot what have I done."

How to make my home (community) a cozy place to live.

"I found my home has more and more things, but I cannot throw any precious memories away."

"I have more free time now, but often I am all alone at home."

"I might want to do some gardening or renovating my home, but it is hard to plan."

How to enjoy a sense of family companionship when I don't have one?

"I try to build good relationship with my relatives and their family member."

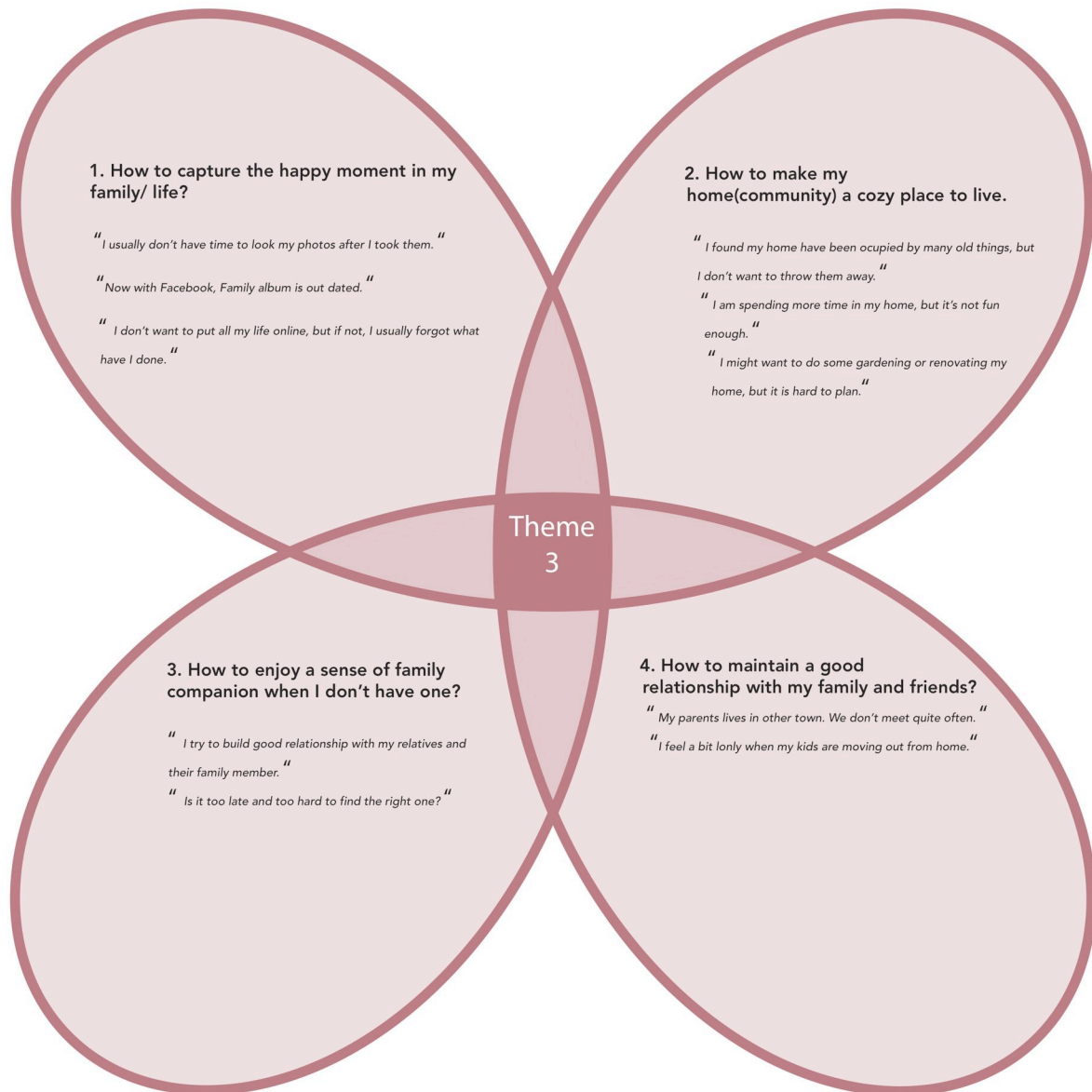
"Is it too late and too hard to find the right partner?"

"I raise pets as my companies."

How to maintain a good relationship with my family and friends?

"My parents lives in other town. We don't meet quite often."

"I feel a bit lonely when my kids are moving out from home."



Theme 3: Relationship and home

Figure 4.4 Theme poster – Relationship and home (Source: the author)

4.3. Second study Phase-Context immersion:

In the second phase of the workshop, Context immersion, all participants are soaked in the ideologies and cultural codes of the active boomers, while they ideating new service concepts that reconstruct the cultural context of boomers. This phase consists of three main steps, which are concept ideation, concept evaluation, and scenario projection.

4.3.1. Concept Ideation

Firstly, while the concept ideation, the crowd was divided into small groups, each with a leader and two to three member. For covering the three design themes, in this workshop, the nine participants have been divided into three teams each consists of three members. Each team has separated discussion area, in general, on a table sizing about two square meters (See Figure 4.5). On each table, every team has a 'Theme poster,' two large blank sheets of paper and post-its of two colors on its table. Each team also has 48 idea cards in the same color as their theme poster, and of 48 cards, 16 were noted with letter A, 16 with B, and 16 with C (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.4 Live scene of the concept ideation (Source: the author)

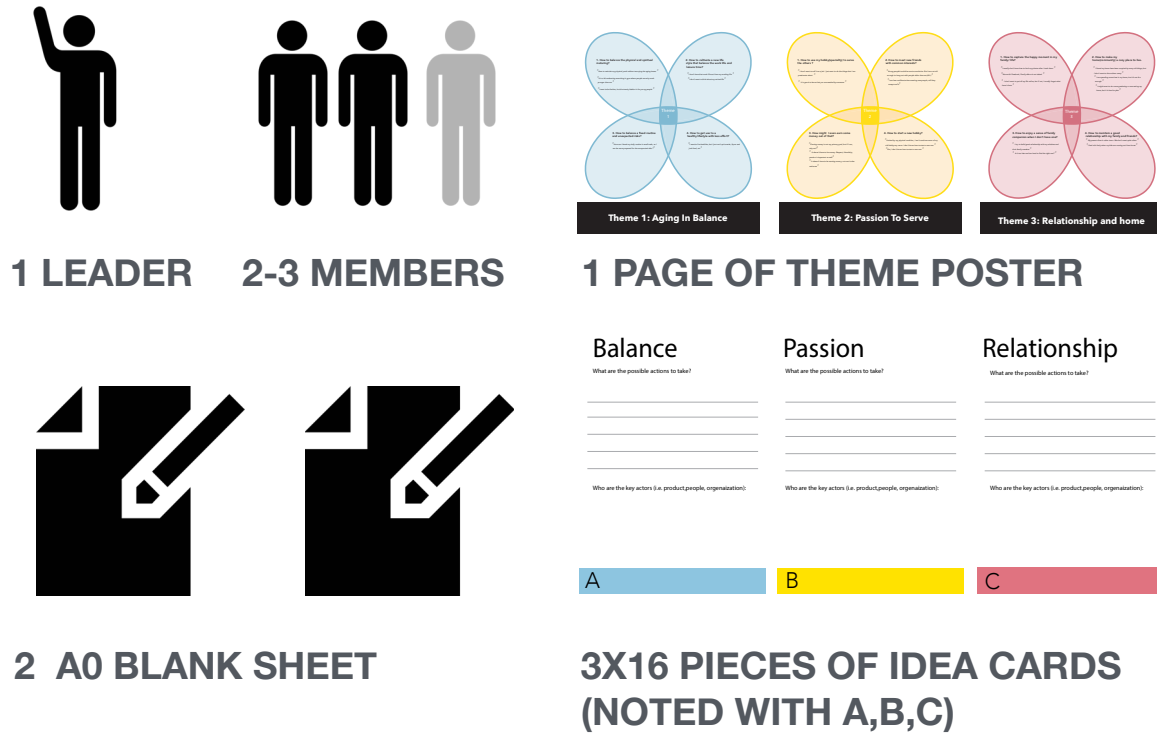


Figure 4.6 Team components and the Ideation kit of co-design workshop (Source: the author)

The ideation process starts with the first of three twenty-minute rounds of discussion (See Figure 4.6), in which the team address assumptions and rough ideas inspired by the 'Theme poster' on their table. Both the leader and members are encouraged to note key assumptions and rough ideas on different colored post-its.

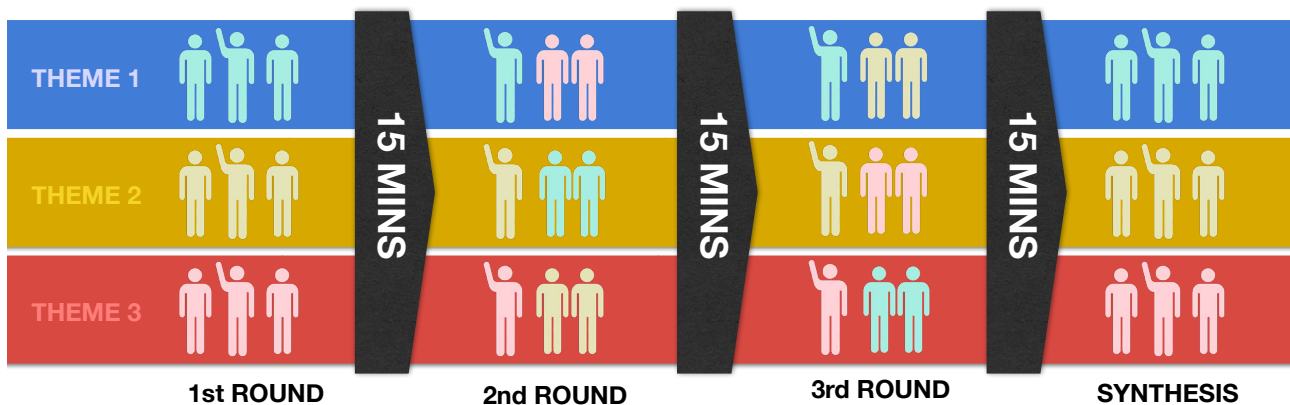


Figure 4.7 the team Circulation of the three-rounds concept ideation (Source: the author)

At the end of the initial round (i.e., Round A) of ideation, the leader remains at the same table and transfers the concepts from that round onto concept cards in sequence (e.g., Concept A1, Concept A2, and so forth). Team members are shifted to a new table with a different 'Theme poster'. As they move to a new theme, they carry essential assumptions, ideas and questions from the previous round into the new discussion.

To begin the second round (i.e., Round B) of ideation, the team leader welcomes new members and briefly fills them in on the assumptions, rough ideas and core concepts discussed by the previous team in the first round. The leader encourages the new team to build ideas and assumptions using the base formed in the previous round. Within the conversation in the second round, assumptions, ideas and concepts start to link and connect. Accordingly, the leader of each team transfers the new convergent onto concept cards, like last round, in sequence. In addition, similar assumptions and ideas are sorted in groups.

At the end of third round (i.e., Round C) of ideation, all of the concepts at each table have been cross-pollinated with insights from prior discussions, and the service concepts of the context-reconstruction were emerging. These initial concepts are documented on the idea cards for round C and pasted on top of the idea/assumption clusters from the previous round.

After three rounds of ideation, all the team members returned to their original tables to integrate the result of their tours. In this round, each team synthesizes the concepts created under its original theme and completes the transference of concepts from the post-its to the idea cards for Round C.

4.3.2. Concept Evaluation

After all the concepts were gathered, each team was given 15 minutes to score (0-5) each concept, according to the three drivers of innovation suggested by IDEO (See Figure 4.8). According to IDEO's human-centric design principle, Innovation can be broken down into three parts: Feasibility (i.e., what is possible to do with technology), Viability (i.e., what is economically sound to do), and desirability (i.e., what people want and need, including unconscious needs). Emphasizing feasibility and viability often does not lead to radical and sustainable innovation. Developing from a feasibility standpoint often leads to "gadgets" which are typically technology-driven and often not offer contextual value to people. Developing from a viability standpoint often leads to fads and fashions that fade and don't tend to become cultural-changing innovations. The human center principle is in line with the service-driven cultural approach, as both set the desirability as the priority. Our world café teams selected the concept with the highest desirability while relatively balancing the other two criteria.

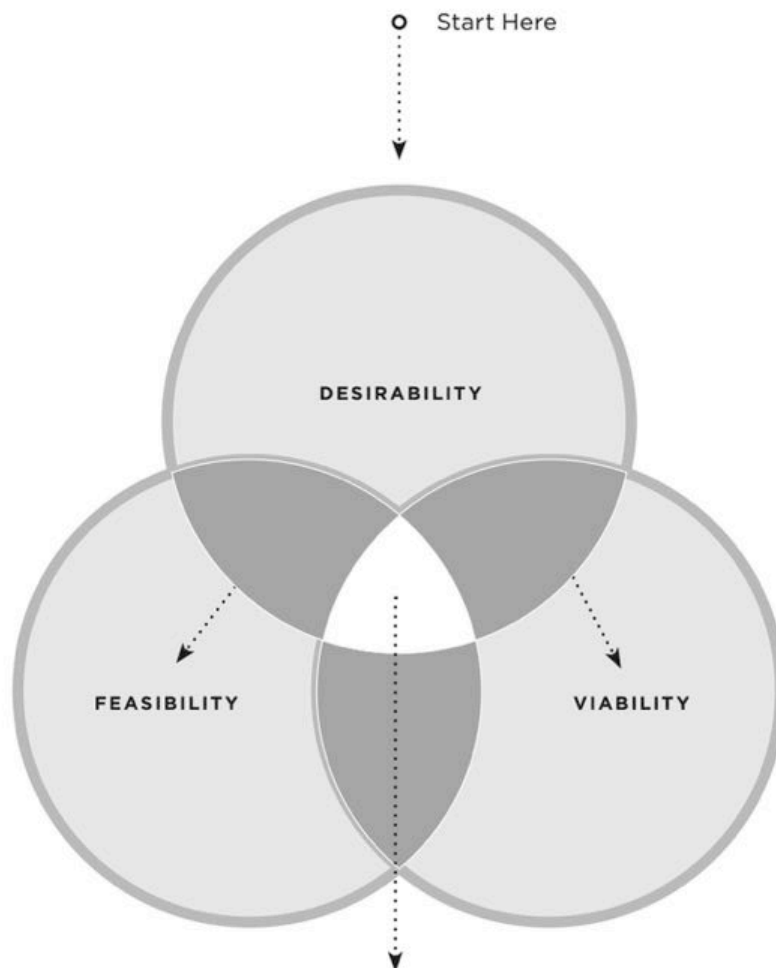


Figure 4.8 IDEO's human-centric design principle (source: (Source: adapted from IDEO)

4.3.3. Scenario Projection

After the concept evaluation, each team brings one desirable concept into the Scenario projection phase. In this phase, the team members transfer the intangible concept into a story with comprehensive cultural context. They enrich the conceptual identity projects of the contextual reconstruction by mapping the essential components of the new service context on the context map. By doing so, the collective identity-building practices are consolidated in a holistic manner and become comprehensible and actionable.



Figure 4.9 Context map for co-design workshop (Source: the author)

As Figure 4.9 indicated, an A0-size service context map are, placed in the center of a big table, surrounded by leaders of three teams. They carefully fill the blanks of each level of the context components on context map with post-its. More specifically, the Scenario projection constitutes seven steps:

Step 1- Referring to the culture contradiction embedded in the theme poster, they start by illustrating the cultural background of the potential customer.

Step 2- Then they delineate the 'self-identity' of the customer according to the cultural contradiction one obtained in the cultural background. In such manner, they define the goal of that character's self-identity project.

Step 3- After that, they transfer the 'value proposition' of the context reconstruction into a value co-creative service that meets the goal of the customer's self-identity project.

Step 4- Next, the team elaborates the identity-building practices in terms of resource exchange activities required for achieving the mutual value.

Step 5- Accordingly, the individual (or community, institution) regarded as the collaborator/s of the resource exchange activities are listed. Meanwhile, tools that help the customer to perform the resource exchanges are elaborated.

Step 6- Finally, to complete the picture, the infrastructure- the backstage of the service - is planned in reference to all the other components.

4.3.4. Outcome of Context Immersion

After three rounds of ideation, the collaborative efforts of the participants were resulted in a series of service concepts. Next, three concepts were selected according to the criteria of human-centric design principle. Finally, these service concepts - Hobby factory, Out of routine activity generator, and virtual garage - were transformed into service concept scenarios through the context mapping technique, which are elaborated as bellow.

Scenario 1: Hobby Factory

This is a story of Helena. She is 52, a young boomer with good physical capacity. That is because she was very much into sports. And she is very socialized. While she is aging, she gradually realized that some of the hobby she used to do, she cannot do it any more. For example, she used to play tennis frequently, and now she cannot continue it due to the dropping physical strength. Her knees hurt when she is doing a lot of running. Helena thinks that might be the time for her to find some new hobbies for herself.

So, there comes a service, namely Hobby Factory. Hobby Factory constitutes an online platform that allow user to put out events, which connect likeminded people to meet each other. For example, Helena can fill up her profile with the detail of her interests in hobby related events. Through this platform, she finds her friends and event recommendations from other users. In addition, the event notification of Hobby factory is location-based. Based on users' geographic location, User can explore the on-going activities around her area. Users can also have a brief overview of the participants in each activity. In this way, user can avoid of awkwardly intruding upon an uninterested crowds.

Helena keeps herself relatively active as she is still working, but beside her work, she also starts to use 'Hobby factory' to take part in activities that forming new hobbies. Most of these new hobbies are sports related according to her interests. However, it also includes other sedentary hobbies for stimulating her new possibilities. After several times of attempts, Helena is gradually accustomed to a new hobby- playing golf. Through learning and practicing golf, she extends her social cycle. Every now and then, she spots some of her old friends' invitation through the platform. But more importantly, she meets some new acquaintances that share the similar interests, and some of them become her friends!

For ALV to realize this service, location-mapping technique should be developed to connect likeminded people on their service platform. ALV may also collaborate with other service provider, like gyms, café, and other event spaces so as to bridge the social activities between virtual and physical worlds. Overall, this service helps boomers to achieve 'self-reinvention', which promotes active lifestyle to the target segments.

Scenario2: Out of routine activity generator

As Olli ages, an expanding portion of his daily activities is turning into routines. He does these mundane activities often without thinking about them, so he ends up with blurry memory of his regular days. This tendency stresses him, as he finds that life is becoming an endless repetition. Hence, in recent years, he is purposely pushing himself to get out of his comfort zone and explore new things. In other words, he wants to break the routine of his accustomed lifestyle.

To meet his goal, ALV present him a new service 'Out of routine activity generator'. This service generates various activities that can be insert into users' mundane routine. Consequentially, it encourages the user to encounter unexpected changes while still maintains a relatively stable routine. For initiate this service, Olli should fills up his user profile in terms of the budget, personal interests and the aim of his lifestyle changes. This profile provides the criteria for the system to generate a weeklong trail routine for Olli. In this trail period, the system would study the current routine of Olli, and insert unexpected event into the blanks of Olli's timetable.

For example, Olli is walking out from the supermarket as usual, and he is about to flow the same path to home. At that moment, Olli's phone rings, he takes out his phone and realizes that an Out-of-routine event is pushed from the system. Although Olli does not has a handsome budget left for this week, the system still generated a free-of-charge activity on his way back home. Olli is encouraged to take a different route when he walking back home after work. This new route is purposefully chosen, as the generator knows Olli is a music fan, and might be interested in dropping by a newly opened record store on this route. As the result, Olli happily spotted a vintage record that aroused his interests.

Indeed, by practicing the out-of-routine activities, Olli gained new impression of his life in this overly-familiar city. He participates in more unique activities during his daytime. Olli is gradually turning from a passive follower of new activities to an active organizer exploring the city and willingly sharing new changes he spotted. His explorative practices connect him to other likeminded participants who also interested in explore the new dimensions of the city and themselves.

For ALV to realize this service, they need to coordinate the user's interests with the new changes in city spotted by other users. In addition, ALV should learn users' daily routine so as to

prioritize the suggestion according to users' contextual needs. Finally, ALV should standardize the whole procedure of the service and visualize the user interface. To build the actual system, ALV should develop a community platform for hosting the user-generated contents.

Scenario 3: Virtual garage

Lisa has a house with a big garage full of her old belongings, which she has trouble throwing away. On one hand, it takes too much effort to move her belongings to the flea market. On the other hand, these belongings often stimulate memories she doesn't want to lose. She wants to document the stories of her collections before giving them away. This summer, Lisa's granddaughter, Tiina, comes to spend summer holiday with her grandma. Tiina wants to start a band with her cousins. But for the practice, they need space. So they ask the permission from Lisa, 'let's clean the garage, it is time to move on.' But it is still pretty hard for Lisa.

To help Lisa move on, Tiina introduced a new service, namely, 'Virtual garage'. This service helps Lisa to digitalize her memorable belongings. Instead of keeping the stuff in the physical storage, she can have all the memorable items in the server. In addition, Lisa can use the online platform to find buyers who are willing to pick up the goods from Lisa's place.

Practically, this service helps users to convert the physical object into digital images, which can be videos or 3D models. For standard usage, the user can use the smart phone to take pictures of the items. These images will be uploaded to a virtual space on the website. This virtual space simulates the view of users' home. In addition, the story behind these items can be attached in video format. For instance, Lisa appreciates the sofa she brought together with her husband for their old cottage. But after they moved to the new apartment, Lisa has to move the sofa to the garage, as it doesn't fit in the smaller living room. It is not difficult to understand the difficulty for Lisa to sell this sofa. But now, Lisa can use the 'Virtual garage' to sell the sofa and store her memories in a digital format. So even the sofa is sold, Lisa can still share the stories behind the sofa with her family member and her friends.

For ALV to realize this service, they need to build this online platform for storing customers' digital items. To further develop this service, ALV may introduce the customer to cleaning company and professional organizer.

4.4. Third study Phase-Tactical implication

After context mapping, each team's leader presented the result of the scenario-projection phase. The ALV's board member evaluated the three scenarios. Eventually, two of the scenarios were, after the workshop, further integrated into the development of ALV's next-generation service platform that accommodates pre-elderlies. Therefore, in the third phase, tactical implication, I was involved in the storyboarding and video production of the integrated service scenarios of ALV's next-generation service platform. Through the visual storytelling, the new service context of ALV is illustrated with more nuances sparked from the aspirational cultural content of active boomers.

Moreover, with the help of this integrated service scenario, ALV's executives and developers have identified the principle service components that, in terms of key user experience in relation to the cultural context, ALV should grasp to make the service system run. Inspired by the scenarios, the further service design process touches ALV's future product development activities, which is exceed from the research scope of this branding research. Due to the confidentiality of the outcome and process of this phase, here in this thesis, I only exemplify a brief overview of the scenario visualization and its impacts.



Figure 4.10 Bedroom scene of ALV's integrated service scenario (Source: the author)



Figure 4.11 Bathroom & Breakfast scene of ALV's integrated service scenario (Source: the author)



Figure 4.12 Exercise & family bonding scene of ALV's integrated service scenario (Source: the author)

95

4.4.1. Outcome of Tactical implication

At the moment, ALV is developing a new generation of its service platform. This key feature is called 'How I feel', which tracks users' activeness on a weekly base. Currently, at the demo stage, multiple sensors are integrated in this tracking system. Users' blood pressure, heart rate and energy expenditure are monitored by the activate bracelet. The changes of body weight and body fat percent are tracked by scale integrated in a bathroom mat. The sleeping status is collected through the sleep condition monitor- beddit. To this level the system still appears conventional and even snoopy, as customer do not gain value out of these collected data. Inspired by the service concept scenarios, ALV noticed that the customer value creation requires the behavior changes that reconstruct the cultural context of the baby boomers. That is to say, the system should link users' physiological states to their social activities, and it should offer identity reinforcement for users to make positive changes.

Hence, in addition to the current data collection, the new platform has a new component 'Social Mine', which documents users' social activities. The current beta system can already collect event around the user. For instance, it studies the statistic connection between the electricity consumption of users' home and social event happening there. Then, the next milestone of the development is measuring the activeness of the event. More specifically, the monitors analyze the positive or negative impact of user's activities in regard to changes occurred to his physiological states. This allows the system to study the routine of the user and make contextual suggestions that triggers the positive routine changes. For instance, it may suggest the user to visit a friend when the system senses the subtle changes of the body status caused by lacking of social activities. When users' body fat percentage changes in an increasing tendency, it may push a notification of a 'jogging events' initiated by other users in the close by neighborhoods. Or, it may send the recipe of Fruit and Vegetable smooth with available ingredients from the close by supermarket. In general, the goal is to guide the user to make life style changes by involving them into service. In such way, the co-created value in these activities can reward users' behavior change.

Overall, this new system offers value from more dimensions then contextless instructions, which helps the baby boomers to reconstruct cultural context collectively that actualize their ethos of 'self-reinvention'. ALV has realized they could not force boomers to convert to the 'active aging' model. Instead, they could offer contexts for boomers to 'reinvent' themselves in their own cultural context. The triggers of their lifestyle changes come from the service ecosystem, and ALV are only the platform facilitator. The brand value emerges from the interaction and engagement among users and contexts.

In the future, ALV will continuously involve active boomers in the brand development. They will learn new ideology and cultural codes from these boomers, which will then transmute into service concepts. These service concepts would be integrated into the service platform as sellable Apps. The customer who has been inventing the service will be entitled the revenue.

5

DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

PROJECT EVALUATION

The Descriptive Study II is an evaluation and reflection of, following Kirkparick Model (Kirkpatrick, 1959), all the prior processes of the strategic branding project for ALV. It first describes the informants' feedback towards the image probing and identity project interview they went through. It then offers the commands and reactions from the co-design workshop participants. It finally describes the mindset transformation of ALV's executives and how SDCI approach impacts their ongoing brand transformation.

5.1. Overview of Project Evaluation

In order to evaluate the application of SDCI approach in ALV's case, structured feedback sections were conducted after each stage of the research. These feedback section were structured following Kirkparick Model that introduced by Donald.L.Kirkpatrick from Wisconsin University in 1959. This model is broadly adopted in the evaluation of corporate training since 1960s, and cast profound impacts on the management research in this field. As stated earlier, the main purpose of this study is gaining data for evaluate the procedure and impact of apply SDCI approach in ALV's strategic branding case. Thus, it is appropriate to select Kirkpatrick model here because of its simplicity in the microscope evaluation of training experience.

Kirkpatrick model consists of four levels of feedback collection, known as four-Rs, including reaction, learning, behavior, result. The first two levels, reaction and learning experiences, are usually collected immediately after the learning events. The collection of reaction experiences focuses on understanding the satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the project from participants. The collection of learning experiences emphasis on assessing the knowledge, skill, and attitude acquired by the participants. In addition, the other two levels, behavior and result feedbacks, are usually done after the collection of learning experiences within three months. The collection of behavior feedbacks is mainly about the solidification of acquired knowledge, skill and attitude in participants' daily job. The collection of result feedbacks often carries out the obtained value of the participants from the mindset changes, knowledge and skill acquirement.

According to the Kirkpatrick model, the feedback sections were conducted through face-to-face interviews, and all feedbacks were documented as testimonies for the Descriptive Study II. In each section, structured questions were addresses, which are listed as follow:

Feedback sections with interview informants

What do you think and feel about today's interview?

Have you learned anything valuable from preparing the image probes?
(Knowledge or capability)

Is there anything you learned that you could apply in your future life?

Do you see a potential direction for you to improve your life?

Feedback sections with co-design workshop participants

Which contexts do you think and feel about today's workshop?

Have you gain better understanding of the boomer culture? (knowledge or capability)

How do you see co-creation as an approach of today's workshop?

How do you see the value of the visual materials in facilitating the co-creation process?

Feedback sections with ALV executives

What do you think and feel about the whole project?

What has ALV learned from the project?(knowledge or capability)

What has changed in the company after this project?

Do you see the potential to apply the SDCI model in the future?

All the collected data were analyzed to evaluate the limitations and advantages of the SDCI model.

5.2. Reflections on the culture inquiry

The results of this cultural inquiry give the evidence that the image probing technique fits well with the cultural branding approach. These interviews have gained a rich range of insights from each informant. Through the context mapping technique, these individual nuances have merged in macro scale themes that makeup a holistic picture that vividly delineate d the cultural context of aging Finnish boomers. In addition to that, most of the informants have also been asked to give feedback of the reaction and learning experiences of the study they participated. Moreover, in reflect to the feedbacks from the informants, I also assessed my own experience, as the researcher, of the application of identity project interview. Synthesis all the experiences, two important reflections are stated as follow.

5.2.1. Delicate control of the elicitation

After analysis, it is prominent that all the seven informants have put a serious amount of effort into collecting images. The reason behind is that, as many said; the process of the 'image hunting' is a journey of 'self-exploration' for them. Most of them found the hidden aspirations and dreams of their life, and few aspects that they want to tackle to complete their self-reinvention. Some informants described the identity project interview as exciting, as they *have gained new understanding of their life and many more life goals that they want to achieve*.

However, when the interview is so deeply related to their hidden thought, it could be difficult, at some point, for the researcher to hold the situation. There were few times the informant feels difficult for articulating the personal experience and deep cultural contradiction. Facing this kind of situation, the researcher should wisely react according to the specific context.

Overall, it is important for the researcher to stay calm and give time and support for the informant to tackle their emotions. Sometime, it is good to ease the tension by changing the topic and come back later to the same issues with a different context.

However, in certain contexts, it is necessary to push even one step further. People tend to unconsciously put on their protection when a stranger is trying to touch the actual motivation of their behaviors. The interviewer should notice when the informant starts talking very objective and abstract terms. In this situation, interviewer should lead the informant to speak out the reason behind their objective opinions. For instance, resonating informants' opinions with interviewers' own life experience is a very effective way to elicit the subjective experiences from the informants. That is to say, all informant can be expressive. They are just having difficult in breaking down their emotions into comprehensive terms. When informants received enough stimulation and support from the interviewer, their 'social tensions' will be able to transform into descriptive stories. At that moment, the ice between the informant and researcher is broken.

5.2.2. Rhythm of the conversation

Rhythm is a difficult sense to master. Often, the emotion flow between the informant and interviewer are energy consuming. Quite often, the informant need stimulations to become brave enough to talk about their deep fear. While, sometime, the best thing the researcher can do is just to give a silence gap and wait for the emotional breakthrough of the informant. One informant said,

'I really feel your interview is mind-blowing. I am so surprised that you can dig out that many things from me. Many times, I don't even know what I am talking about, but you gave me hints to move on.' I used to think that I should always avoid the awkward gap between the topics. Though, in fact, these moments of silence are important of less expressive informants. Wait for about 30 seconds, as the informants are linking ideas that they never thought could be related before, they would start to give interesting insights when they had clarified their thoughts.

5.3. Reflections on the co-design workshop

The co-design workshop showed a collaborative brand management that suits the purpose of SDCI model. The result of the workshop offered the evidence that manifests a smooth transition from open-end insights of the cultural inquiry to specific value-co-creative concepts that contribute to the functional and emotional benefits of the brand. The results of the workshop are specific and contextual, as the ideation was tightly framed by the design opportunities conclude from the prior phenomenological study. As noted earlier, all the participants from the workshop have been asked to give feedback, in terms of the reaction and learning experiences, after the section was over. According to their comments, I made a reflection of the co-creation workshop, detailed in the following paragraphs.

5.3.1. Emphatic understanding

According to the feedback from the participants, they have never thought about the life context of Finnish baby boomers before. While after this workshop, many of them are able to imagine these middle age boomers' life context. The themed poster and other video material have been very evocative. These visual materials have recreated the particular dimensions of boomers' life context, so participants were able to focus on thinking towards the target group under their topic. One participant found *these tools have boosted her imagination and teased her empathy. As she said, she like the video clip played at the beginning of the workshop, and she thinks it is a very good start. Because she can resonate with the female character whom facing middle age crisis. Another participant stated that the 'theme posters' really makes her stand on baby boomer's position, like how would her relatives act in this situation. She found these topics activated her brain to reflect her personal experiences in this context. Said by this informant, ' It might be hard in the beginning, but then I start to imagine someone who I know and what he would act in this situation, or I try to place myself in this situation and think how I would act.'*

These suggest that the workshop has immersed the ALV's executives in the life context of active boomers, so they could reach the empathic understanding of the new ideology and cultural codes of the aging care.

5.3.2. Co-creation mindset

Co-creation is the most outstanding strength of the workshop that noted by all participants. There are two aspects of the co-creation that were mostly mentioned- 'World café', ' themed posters' and 'context mapping technique'.

World café

The participants found the general procedure of the workshop was well structured. Especially during the ideation section, the **'gallery tours'** did encourage the participants to widen their perspective towards the understanding of 'aging boomers'. Some participants considered this tour a self-feeding process, as one informant said, *'I am inspired by the very different perspectives of other teams. When moving from one theme to a new theme, our ideas were getting shaped from multiple dimensions.'*

'Not a single idea is owned by anyone,' said by another participant of the workshop. Aligned with her opinion, most of the participants found it is really good to run the workshop in a constructive way, as they can incorporate other people's ideas into their own thoughts. In such manner, it is easier to build new ideas, as they can refer to the convergent of the prior teams. The team of this informant was the first *came up with this idea- 'senior talent pool', through that platform seniors can collaboratively serving each other's needs. Later on, there emerged a lot of sub-ideas based on this one system. Therefore, that informant found for her it was really good that every body wanted to contribute to some ideas.*

Themed posters

It is also collectively agreed the **themed posters** have well balanced the breadth and depth of ideation section, as they have kept the open-end conversations concentrate on a specific topic. Within limited timeframe, all teams have concluded highly relevant concepts.

However, it is noticed by many participants that the initial round of the ideation is a difficult start. One major reason behind this is that these posters were purposefully designed for helping people understand the context, instead of generating ideas directly. For instance, some participants found *the first round was quite difficult. One mentioned that it was very hard to come up with ideas based on the theme at that point, because his team was thinking very specifically about the entire question written on the poster. They had ideas, but not fitting to all the topics. So they did not put them forwards, but then, when I came to them said 'do not worry about the question that much', then they start to put some thoughts they had, but they did not have enough time to further develop ideas.*

The difficulty some team faced can be attributed to the open-end topics written on the poster. In that circumstance, the theme poster is only used for arousing contextual assumptions about the service concept, which is differed from the problem-solving orientation of typical design ideation. However, based on the central topic of the theme, the teams were able to establish the fundamental assumptions as the base of the further evolution of the concept. With these bases, the following teams can start the dialogue smoothly and get themselves into the subject. As said by the same participant, *in the second round, the whole cultural background became clearer to her team. And, hence, the team actually came up with some idea they had in their mind, and break loose a bit from the exact orientation of problem solving.*

As some participants suggested, the initial round could be easier if they could ideate only with general themes. They prefer coming up with initial ideas freely before framing them by the questions and quotes. This suggests that it is important to set boundaries in the workshop for the ideation to focus on evocative design themes, but still make sure the strategy embeds diverse ideologies and cultural codes.

Context mapping technique

All the participants have appreciated the context map technique, as it truly makes the scenario-planning phase much more approachable. Following this map made it very easy to clarify the diverse thoughts and ideas of the teams into a linear and logic storyline.

Many participants consider that, comparing to many known business design tools, like business model and customer journey, context map offers a more intuitive thinking model. As mentioned by one participant, the context mapping technique has not limited her thinking by putting the boundary. Hence, she found she could think freely and focus on bringing the nuances into the concept, instead of restricted by the tool that she used. As she said, *'It was good that first we ideated a bit about the topic openly. And then we start to put them into the context. This tool makes it very easy to tell the story about the concept. It also makes you think the connections between those elements, so you can rationalize your own thoughts. Therefore, you won't end up standing on abstract ideas, but rather gaining a logical explanation of your claim.'* That is to say, following the context mapping technique, the concept was detailed to break down the abstract value proposition of context reconstruction into essential service components in specific contexts. Hence, the idea becomes very clear to communicate, and easy for people to build upon that and transform it into actionable business practices.

In addition to the benefit of simplifying scenario projection, the context map also helped the participants to filter out irrelevant ideas. In the ideation phase, some teams have clustered too many small ideas in to a single concept. Thanks to the context mapping, they have quickly noticed that they need to simplify the concept to make a strong value proposition. The mapping technique helped them to focus on the linkage among the motivations of a collective identity project in the specific social group, the corresponding social networking practices and perceived values. Once these three elements were rationally jointed, all the other elements could be smoothly generated.

5.3.3. Concerns of the workshop

As cited above, overall, the workshop has met its objective. It was culturally instructive to all the participants, and reached applicable strategies that relevant in the specific context of Finnish baby boomers. However, the participants pointed out some shortcomings of the workshop, which require improvements. Their concerns have been addressed from two aspects- the blurry criteria of the concept evaluation, and the overburdened team leader, which is elaborated as follows.

Blurry criteria of the concept evaluation

Many participants found it difficult for them to select the concept according to the given criteria. That is to say, the evaluation phase was unstructured, and the criteria could be more defined. They were confused while the evaluation phase, as the concepts were unstructured. As one participant said, *her team could have chosen any of these concepts. The way they eventually selected the ideas was not based on these criteria, it was purely based on their assumptions.*

As some participants suggested, the concept selection could rely more on the intuition of people. Certainly, all the concepts could be filtered through an analyzing frame. However, when the initial concepts were still very fuzzy, people won't have enough knowledge to evaluate the value of each concept.

Overburdened team leader

The success of the workshop was largely attributed to the amazing performance of the team leaders. All the leaders found the workshop results were surpassed their expectation. It is exhausting and yet fulfilling, as they have pushed their limits during the co-facilitation.

As a team leader, one actually had to focus very hard. He had to write down all the ideas, which was a lot of effort. Therefore, the workshop was a very intense experience for the leaders, although they were surprised about the fruitful result achieved in such a short time. *As one team leader said, 'in the beginning of the workshop, it was really demanding, as a leader, I have to remember the ideas and assumptions. It was not really easy to deal with a lot of ideas on one sheet of white paper.'* Just like this team leader complained, during the workshop, these team leaders should be able to acutely make connections between the ideas and sorting the assumptions. In addition to that, they are also responsible for leading the conversation and raising the awareness of certain ideas and assumptions to inspire the team members.

Considering the level of skill required in tackling this task, it might be a good idea for ALV to hire the experienced 'co-design facilitator' for their workshops in the future. This might create new job opportunities for the designers who have been trained with business perspectives, as they have both visualization skills and strategic knowledge to tackle these difficulties.

5.4. Reflections on ALV's brand transition

After finished the whole project, I have had a long interview with the CEO of ALV again. This interview was about the overall evaluation of the whole project, in which I was trying to understand the actual impact of the re-branding project. The CEO has highly valued the whole project and said the impact of the strategy had laid a fundamental brand transition.

The CEO appraises the SDCI approach as a new orientation for ALV to think about the brand. He considers the SDCI approach as more comprehensive than the Mind-share approach he used to think about the brand. He said, back then, although we invested a lot effort on user study, 'we are not thinking that much about the real people, but more like test what we want to offer as a company.'

As the CEO said, he used to think the brand renewal was about designing the new colors, symbols, senses, or user experiences. The SDCI approach has changed his perspective. 'Through your interviews and the workshop, you bring the ideological value into the service based branding strategy. Now I see the point of service co-creation as the essential way to renew our brand. All the visual elements, even the user experiences are the attributes of the service context.' Although the company name ALV refers to active aging, the executives have not understood the actual meaning of active aging. As the CEO admitted, 'our brand name, color and communications are just empty shell, there are not much relevance.'

Through the lens of the active boomers, ALV's executives have finally gained the empathetic understanding of the ideological changes emerging in the elderly-care industry. This has made a big step towards the actual understanding of 'active aging'. 'Active aging' cannot be relying on the contextless technical platform, as people will not gain much value from the plain data, these machines collected from them. As the CEO stated, the prior brand transition of ALV only results in partial understandings of the consumer market, which made ALV straggled with the tactical innovations in the shrinking market niche of public elderly care. Thus, the product innovation (e.g., emergency rescue service for the lone elderly) was not appreciated due to the limited understanding of the ideological changes, among the boomer generation, towards the elderly life. Therefore, ALV should co-create contextual brand value with the customer in the joint section of their service context and consumers' cultural context. In addition, the holistic cultural approach ensures ALV grasps the ideological evolutions behind the phenomenon instead of puzzled by diverse behaviors of individual customers. As the CEO missioned, ALV now understand that Active aging has different stages and emphasis in different people's life. To somebody the Active aging is about personal wellbeing management, and for others it is more about 'social competence' or 'nurturing relationships'. Therefore, it is especially essential to have the empathetic understanding of the prominent social tensions, new ideologies and cultural codes of the boomers. The knowledge not only helps ALV straighten out a new landscape of the elderly-care market, but also reveals new dimensions in this market.

In addition to that epithetical understanding of aging boomers' cultural context, ALV is also empowered by effective methods to generate branding strategies in forms of collaborative service. When asked to comment on the workshop result, the CEO said that, at first he was a bit worried that the strategy might be very high level and not concrete. But after the workshop, he thinks collaboration among participants has successfully bring cultural insights down to actionable strategies. He found that it is very likely for ALV to continue the further brand transformation after they gathered the resources to go ahead with these service concepts. This suggests that the cultural strategies have been transferred into comprehensive service scenarios, which well informed the context building of the service system. In such a way the brand management becomes agile and responsive, which becomes more comprehensive to ALV's executives. Thus, the CEO gave the high credits to the SDCI model for bringing a fundamental perspective change in ALV for engaging consumers in the future.

6

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

6.1. Retrospective review

In this thesis, a strategic branding project has been carried out for a small service business in elderly-care sector- Active life village (ALV) - that struggles finding out how to transform its brand to accommodate the rapid growing Finnish baby boomers. Here, I have been stressed on the criticality for ALV to gain a comprehensive cultural understanding of the cohort of boomers, which can be seen from three aspects. Firstly, a number of statistics has suggested that, major crises may occur due to the unsustainable public elderly-care system, which attributes largely to the rapid growing boomer retirees in Finland. Secondly, holding a considerable purchasing power, the consumer cohort of boomers shows a huge market potential for elderly-care. Lastly, and most importantly, as a bridging generation, Finnish boomers are potentially bringing on a revolution that changes the cultural context of the elderly life. Due to the distinctive value of this generation, it is highly possible that the current elderly-care model will be revolutionized according to their value. Thus, in order to adapt to this upcoming market change, it was crucial for ALV to incorporate the value of boomers into their brand, and guiding the product development and marketing practices accordingly.

However, this purpose could not be fulfilled, with the old Mindshare branding and technology-driven innovation approach of ALV, which was the first barrier that I have had to overcome. In business wise, a brand should differentiate the company from its competitors in the market. The SDCI branding approach shows more potential in creating differentiation in comparison with the previous Mindshare approach ALV has taken. The ALV's brand was initially driven by breakthrough technology, but that market niche was quickly filled with competitors with better technique solutions. After other company tackled the same area, ALV's brand has lost its distinction. ALV realized they had to think differently. Instead of solely pushing technology development, they have started to look into the actual needs of the customers. Through the prototype testing, ALV incorporated the needs of the customer and transformed it into tactical improvement to the old system. However, the user-centered approach is not an effective differentiator, especially when ALV found their competitors have occupied the market with more matured solutions.

Thus, seeking for an appropriate branding and innovation approach for ALV, a literature review was carried out to analyze ALV's Mindshare branding in comparison with Holt's cultural branding approach. This comparison suggested the supereminence of Cultural approach in leveraging brands in social changes, which suits the situation of ALV. With this approach, a brand can occupy a unique market share through expressing new ideologies that mitigate particular social tensions obtained by target customers in social changes. However, there were gaps for me to implement the cultural strategy in its current myth-driven logic. Firstly, a hands-on flow of what and how to transfer cultural insights to applicable innovation is absent. Secondly, the myth-driven logic fits better the iconic brands with considerable cultural capitals and media resources. In addition, for baby boomers, actualizing positive changes in their life maybe the real crux of their social tension. Thus, it is not feasible for ALV to follow the typical Myth-driven cultural approach in its brand transformation.

To bridge the gap, further methodological exploration has been conducted to examine the underlying links to the brand value creation amongst service-dominant brand logic and the

emerging citizen-artist cultural approach. The findings from this study revealed the most prominent aspects, that is the necessity of co-creating brand value in cultural contexts with customers when implementing cultural strategy in service business. Accordingly, I introduced the premises of a service-logic adapted cultural approach, service driven cultural innovation (SDCI), which fills the gaps of myth-driven cultural branding. In SDCI approach, consumers are not just passive receivers but active co-creators of cultural materials. That is to say, they have the willingness and possibility of actualizing their collective identity project. To this end, consumers collectively construct the cultural context of the service system of a brand to co-create values that supplies their collective identity project. SDCI proposed a potential way to implement the cultural branding insights in a service context. Following this approach, a company is building contexts that support the brand value co-creation, in which customers cultivate themselves. Moreover, as the customers are the equivalent brand facilitator, their collective will shape the context, which in turn leads to the institutional changes that shapes the new culture. Following the SDCI approach, a three-phase design research was carried out to further progress the strategic branding case of ALV. Meanwhile, this empirical application of SDCI also collected first-hand data that validate the applicability of this new approach in small service business.

In the first phase of the design research, descriptive study I - cultural inquiry, a small scope phenomenological study has been conducted, through identity project interview with image probing technique, to gain experiences from the active boomers in Finland. The life experiences from these boomer informants revealed the ethos of the populist world, self-reinvention, and potential ideological opportunities that, in three aspects - aging in balance, relationship and home, and passion to serve, suggest the reconstruction of current cultural context of elderly-care market. In the prescriptive study- co-design workshop, a world café workshop was conducted to simulate the translation from cultural insights into actionable innovation strategy. More specifically, with the context mapping technique, the cultural insights have been successfully transformed into service scenarios that guide the ALV's further service development and marketing. In the descriptive study II- Project evaluation, I evaluated the application of SDCI approach in ALV through examining the feedback and reflections collected throughout the design process. According to the evaluation, it is clear that the SDCI approach and process brought great value to ALV. The executives of ALV gained empathetic understanding of the distinctive value propositions of Finnish boomers. In addition, they were also empowered with effective methods to generate branding strategies in forms of collaborative service.

Overall, SDCI approach has brought in a fundamental influence to the branding and innovation practices of ALV. When co-creating brand culture through service that engages the customers, ALV are not narrowly improving the experience of individual customer, but offers the means for customers to tackle the context reconstructions they have collectively aspired. In addition, comparing to the traditional myth-driven cultural approach, the brand values created through service can be more localized and contextual. More precisely, in myth communication model, the company is often pushing ideology from in a top-down fashion. While, through the SDCI model, the company creates the service system in which customers offered the value of practicing identity building activates, and gradually become an initiative co-creator of the cultural context of the bra. As customers experience the ideology through actual participation, they cultivate themselves in

the services. Hence, ALV can be differentiated by the 'cultural value' it co-created with the customers in services. Although the evaluation of the factual customer engagement and its effects on brand value co-creation takes time, at least based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that most of the objectives of the thesis, stated in the introduction, were achieved.

6.2. Applicability of the SDCI approach

Hands-on implementation of cultural branding approach in a service context is unclear and merely touched by prior research. This thesis demonstrates an adaptation of cultural branding approach in the strategic branding project of Active Life Village, a small service company in Finland. It took from a design research perspective and conducted a methodological exploration of the possibility of accommodating cultural branding by introducing service dominant logic into the methodology. This methodological exploration is concluded with a tailored branding and innovation procedure for ALV, namely Service driven cultural innovation (SDCI). This service-logic adapted cultural approach provides brand practitioner instruments to elicit empathetic cultural insights from a particular cultural group and translate the insights into co-creative service opportunities that engage target segments.

In addition, the SDCI branding approach may offer its comprised methods to bring service design practices into a crucial element of cultural innovation of a brand. I find it can be especially valuable to those service designers (similar to my background) that strive to make impacts on the strategic brand development.

The SDCI branding approach and its comprised methods are a strategic branding methodology, and it has the potential to be applied for other service corporations. The crucial preliminary work for applying it on another occasion is the identification of the cultural phenomenon. In different context, the recruitment criteria of informants may vary. Thus, the study of aging boomers might be only valuable for the case of ALV. That is to say the result of this thesis is limited, and it still need greater depth analysis in pilot projects. Thus, care should be taken in generalizing the results to other companies facing different cultural context.

In addition, to optimize the SDCI branding approach, it requires future work to further analysis the effectiveness of the adoption of service concepts brought out from the co-design workshop. The research goal is satisfied, as two concepts the 'Hobby factory' and 'Out of routine activity generator' is incorporated into the new service platform as important features. However, ALV is now concentrating its resources in developing the new version of its service platform. Hence, it is not feasible for them to invest further efforts in developing new service concepts. According to this situation, the development SDCI approach is open-ended, as its process might need to include further testing of service prototypes. In such a way, it may enhance the adaptability of the service ecosystem so as to keep relevant to the changing ideology of the society.

6.3. Implication guild of SDCI approach

Managers of small service-companies, as well as service designer in branding business, could consider adopting the SDCI approach in their projects. That is because of customer engagement is crucial for operating service system, and SDCI approach is helpful in scoping the unique service opportunities and in engaging customers' brand value co-creation. Adapted from Holt's cultural branding approach, SDCI shares the same ground of the cultural consumption theory. However, SDCI is further evolved with the assumption that citizens will break free from the imposed 'consumer culture' manipulated by big corporations. Moreover, citizens are slowly gaining back the initiative to define their values and form cultural context authentically built upon their life. In other words, SDCI approach upholds a bottom-up fashion in the construction of culture context. Instead of the company, citizens are the owner of (local) culture. Liberated citizens will perform actions that have instrumental value add meaning to their lives derived from the instrumental value of their actions.

Following this assumption, the brand is developed in the form of service system comprised with citizens and like-minded stakeholders, and the company is only a co-facilitator of the system. In this system, citizens are not regarded as passive purpose seeker who fed with ideology composed in cultural products. Instead, they are equivalent facilitators of (cultural) resources in the system. Citizens develop the cultural content collaboratively to help their individual needs of self-actualization within the collective identity project.

As the co-facilitator of the brand, the company serves as a cultural artist and community pillar. The company intrigue defined customer segments by incorporating desired ideologies into a service system that resonate with their collective self-identity project. This service system sustains customers' engagement by offering contextual values for cultivate customers to act out the new ideologies. In such way, customers experience the new ideology through actual participation. Hence, they gradually cultivate themselves to actualize their desired self-identity in service participation. Moreover, as the customers are the equivalent brand facilitator, their collective will can shape the context, which in turn leads the institutional changes that shaping the culture context.

Because the consumer culture evolves overtime alongside major ideological changes in the society, the collective identity project of target segments is also changing accordingly. To adapt these changes requires highly sensitive and delicately balanced service ecosystems. Hence, the role of brand manager is proposing new service system that engages customers to co-create desired contextual values contributing to the collective identity project. In such way, service designers can be the ideal candidates of brand manager.

The implementation of SDCI approach can be break into two major stages: **inquiring cultural insights** in particular cultural context and **designing service system** that accommodate desired cultural contexts.

Inquiring cultural insights

The inquiry of relevant cultural insights is essentially about identifying and revealing cultural contradictions. That is because of the cultural contradictions indicates the needs for new collective identity project among particular social group. In order to identify the emerging cultural contradictions, the brand practitioner needs to gain an exhaustive understanding of the culture context of target segments. Here, to gain the empathetic understanding, the practitioner should not view citizens in the role of a consumer, nor emphasis on their fragmented consumption behaviors. Instead, the practitioner should draw holistic cultural insights from citizens' collective identity projects of a social group in society. More specifically, the practitioner should strive to find the right informants (in Holt's term- cultural insiders) who can interpret the culture of their social group. That is because the most groundbreaking viewpoint is not often come out of feeders. In facing the cultural contradictions, feeders may sense the mismatch between their self-identity and the dominant culture. They obtain acute social tensions due to the mismatch, while lack the means and motivations to reconstruct the cultural context. For example, the consumer culture of elderly care is still dominated by seniors born during the world war, but the boomers are very different than the prior generation. Hence, they receive severe social tensions while aging is dragging them into the cultural context of the elderly. On the contrary, insiders believe in a distinctive ethos despite it may challenge by the dominant culture. In facing the cultural contradictions, the active boomers I interviewed actively create and practice identity projects that cultivating themselves according to the ethos they believe. Hence, when designing the new service, brand practitioners might get much more inspired by the authentic insights of culture insiders.

When scope the culture insiders, practitioners are suggested to immerse fully into the populist worlds. Populist worlds are usually found on the 'margins of the society.' In such places, people are expected to act rebellious and break free from traditional economic and social institutions established by the dominant culture. For instance, in ALV's case, I found active boomers as insiders who interpreted the new ethos of boomer generation. To better understand the ethos believed by insiders, practitioners could learn from the identity projects of them in particular contexts. For example, I found out the active boomers' ethos from their dreams for their distinctive identity projects that share the same goal of self-reinvention. In addition, the practitioners can use the Context Mapping technique to analyze the identity projects they collected from informants. This context mapping is a valuable and practical tool that translates cultural insights into service context. More precisely, it deconstructs the cultural phenomenon in informants' narratives to bring out insights.

When deconstructing informants' identity projects through the service lens, practitioners should focus on informants' collective goals of identity-building practices. Firstly, these collective goals indicate the common themes of social tensions of their social group, and hence, identify the context elements that desire reconstructions. Secondly, insiders' complex narratives are further interpreted in light of perceived values embedded in boomers' diverse identity-building practices. As different practices are used to fight against the same cultural contradictions, each boomer's perceived values becoming fragments that, assembled, create a holistic understanding of the common 'cultural codes' of the ethos. These cultural codes indicate the collective aspirations of

the context reconstruction of the current cultural context. Hence, the brand practitioner may be able to design a new service system accommodate these aspired context reconstructions.

Designing service system

After the brand practitioner grasped how informants perceive and create value in their identity projects of context reconstructions (i.e. cultural codes). Then, they could use these insights to define the value propositions for designing new service system so as to engage a greater range of customer segments represented by the informants. When formulating value propositions, service scenario planning is suggested. I suggest the practitioner to condense and visualize the learned cultural codes and conduct a world café workshop. In such workshop, the brand practitioner is collaborating directly with design strategists and other executives in the company. In this workshop, the participants are immersed in a cultural setting. In such manner, they rapidly grasp the cultural codes and wisely use their creativity to ideate value propositions of service concepts. Here, The context mapping technique is used again, but reversely, to reconstruct a service context promoting a new culture (i.e. ethos believed by insiders). The team then enriches the conceptual 'value proposition' by mapping the essential components of the service on the context map. In this way, the team can consolidate the value co-creation process and turn it into comprehensible and actionable service concepts. The context mapping constitutes six steps:

Step 1- Referring to the culture contradiction embedded in the theme poster, they start by illustrating the background story of the potential customer.

Step 2- Then they delineate the 'self-identity' of the customer according to the social tensions one obtained through the background story. In addition to that, they define the goal of that self-identity project.

Step 3- After that, they transfer the concept into a value that meeting the goal of the customer's self-identity project would preserve.

Step 4- Next, the team elaborates the ritual practices in terms of behavior changes required for achieving the value.

Step 5- Accordingly, tools that help the customer to perform the ritual practices are developed. Furthermore, the individual (or group) regarded as the collaborator/s of the ritual activities are listed.

Step 6- Finally, to complete the picture, the infrastructure- the backstage of the service - is planned in reference to all the other components.

Finally, this process results with service scenarios that give a clear direction of conducting further service design practices. The further development of the service concept can result in guidance for product development and marketing activities. Go through all these efforts, the company eventually may propose new service system that empowering customers to shape a new culture.

7

REFERENCE

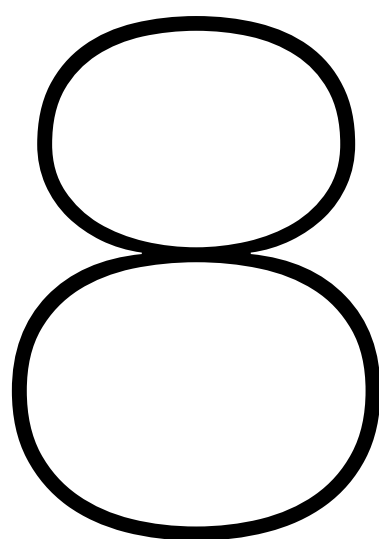
- Barney, J., Wright, M., & Ketchen, D. J. (2001). The resource-based view of the firm: Ten years after 1991. *Journal of management*, 27(6), 625-641.
- Belk, R. W., Wallendorf, M., & Sherry Jr, J. F. (1989). The sacred and the profane in consumer behavior: Theodicy on the odyssey. *Journal of consumer research*, 1-38.
- Blessing, L. T., & Chakrabarti, A. (2009). *DRM, a design research methodology*. London: Springer.
- Bourdieu, P. (1979) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Translated by Richard Nice 1984. Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press.
- Brown, G. H. (1953). Brand Loyalty-fact of fiction. *Trademark Rep.*, 43, 251.
- Copeland, M. T. (1923). Relation of Consumers' Buying Habits to Marketing Methods. *Harvard Business Review*, 1(3), 282-289.
- Chandler, J. D., & Vargo, S. L. (2011). Contextualization and value-in-context: How context frames exchange. *Marketing Theory*, 11(1), 35-49.
- Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' error: Emotion, reason and the human brain*. New York: Putnam.
- Farquhar, P. H. (1994). Strategic challenges for branding. *Marketing Management*, 3(2), 8-15.
- Gardner, B. B., & Levy, S. J. (1955). The product and the brand. *Harvard Business Review*, 33(2), 33-39.
- Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure, and contradictions in social analysis*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*.
- Goodyear, M. (1996, April). Divided by a common language: diversity and deception in the world of global marketing, annual conference-market research society (vol. 39, pp. 343-354). The market research society.
- Heding, T., Knudtzen, C. F., & Bjerre, M. (2008). *Brand management: Research, theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Helsingin Sanomat. (2010, august 2). Retiring baby boomers have considerable purchasing power. Helsingin Sanomat international edition

-
- Holbrook, M. B. (1987). Mirror, mirror, on the wall, what's unfair in the reflections on advertising?. *The Journal of Marketing*, 95-103.
- Holt, D. B. (2004). *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding*. Harvard Business Press.
- Holt, D., & Thompson, C. (2004) Man-of-Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity in Everyday Consumption, *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 31, 425-440
- Holt, D., & Cameron, D. (2010). *Cultural strategy: Using innovative ideologies to build breakthrough brands*. Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, S. D., & Derozier, C. (2004). The normative imperatives of business and marketing strategy: grounding strategy in resource-advantage theory. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 19(1), 5-22.
- Humphrey, N. (1992). *A history of the mind*. Simon and Schuster.
- Jacoby, J., & Kyner, D. B. (1973). Brand loyalty vs. repeat purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing research*, 1-9.
- Jacoby, J., Olson, J. C., & Haddock, R. A. (1971). Price, brand name, and product composition characteristics as determinants of perceived quality. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55(6), 570.
- Karisto, A. (2007). Finnish Baby Boomers and the Emergence of the Third Age, *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, 2(2), 91–108.
- Kaufmann, H. R., Loureiro, S. M. C., Basile, G., & Vrontis, D. (2012). The increasing dynamics between consumers, social groups and brands. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 15(4), 404-419.
- Kjellberg, H., & Helgesson, C. F. (2007). On the nature of markets and their practices. *Marketing Theory*, 7(2), 137–162.
- Klein, N. (1999). *No logo: taking on the brand bullies*. New York, Picador.
- Knapp, M. L. (1980). *Essentials of nonverbal communication* (pp. 203-229). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Lakoff, G. (1990). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind* (pp. 1987-1987). Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Lasn, K. (1999). *Culture jam*. New York: Quill.

- Leventhal, R.C. (1997). Aging consumers and their effects on the marketplace. *Journal of Consumer marketing*, 14(4), 276-281.
- Levy, S. J. (1959). Symbols for sale. *Harvard business review*, 37(4), 117-124.
- Löbner, H., & Hahn, M. (2013). Measuring Value-in-Context from a Service-Dominant Logic's Perspective. *Review of Marketing Research*, 10, 255-282.
- Lusch, R. F., & Vargo, S. L. (2006). Service-dominant logic: reactions, reflections and refinements. *Marketing theory*, 6(3), 281-288.
- Lusch, R. F., Vargo, S. L., & Wessels, G. (2008). Toward a conceptual foundation for service science: Contributions from service-dominant logic. *IBM Systems Journal*, 47(1), 5-14.
- Maglio, P. P., & Spohrer, J. (2008). Fundamentals of service science. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 18-20.
- Mamolo, M., & Scherbov, S. (2009). Population projections for forty-four European countries: The ongoing population ageing, *European Demographic Research Papers*, Vienna Institute of Demography.
- Mann, N. (2012, September 3). Finland must tackle challenge of aging population, says IMF. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from <http://www.publicfinanceinternational.org/news/2012/09/finland-must-tackle-challenge-of-aging-population-says-imf/>
- Marshall, A. (1927). *Principles of economics. An introductory volume.*
- Maxwell, J. A. (1998). Designing a qualitative study. *Handbook of applied social research methods*, 69-100.
- McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and consumption: a theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods. *Journal of consumer research*, 71-84.
- McCracken, G. (Ed.). (1988). *The long interview (Vol. 13).* Sage.
- Merz, M. A., He, Y., & Vargo, S. L. (2009). The evolving brand logic: a service-dominant logic perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37(3), 328–344.
doi:10.1007/s11747-009-0143-3
- Mick, D. G., & Buhl, C. (1992). A meaning-based model of advertising experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 317-338.

-
- Muller, T.E. & O' Cass, A. (2001). Targeting the young at heart: seeing senior vacationers the way they see themselves. *Journal of vacation marketing*, 7(4), 285-301.
- Nieminen, M. (2007). Population development in independent Finland - greying Baby Boomers, Finland 1917-2007: The Finnish independence in statistics, Statistics Finland.
- Normann, R., & Ramirez, R. (1993). Designing interactive strategy. *Harvard business review*, 71(4), 65-77.
- Nordal, E. (2010, April 6). Finnish baby boomers caught in mid-life crisis. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from <http://www.icenews.is/2010/04/06/finnish-baby-boomers-caught-in-mid-life-crisis/>
- Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept-image management. *The Journal of Marketing*, 135-145.
- Piekkola, H. (2004). Active ageing policies in Finland, ETLA Discussion Papers, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA), No. 898
- Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (1994). Strategy as a field of study: Why search for a new paradigm?. *Strategic management journal*, 15(S2), 5-16.
- Saari, M. (2013). Life expectancy at birth by sex in 1980–2013, Population and Cause of Death Statistics, Statistics Finland.
- Schroeder, J. E., Salzer-Mörling, M., & Askegaard, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Brand culture*. Taylor & Francis.
- Shipman, C. & Forer, B. (2011) *The Good Life: Saving for Your Dreams*, ABC World news, Retrieved from <http://abcnews.go.com/US/retirement-revolution-saving-dreams/story?id=14118561>
- Thompson, C. J., Pollio, H. R., & Locander, W. B. (1994). The spoken and the unspoken: a hermeneutic approach to understanding the cultural viewpoints that underlie consumers' expressed meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 432-452.
- Thwaites, T., Davis, L., & Mules, W. (2002). *Introducing cultural and media studies: a semiotic approach*. Palgrave.
- Vargo, S. L., & Akaka, M. A. (2009). Service-dominant logic as a foundation for service science: clarifications. *Service Science*, 1(1), 32–41.
- Vargo, S. L., & Akaka, M. A. (2012). Value cocreation and service systems (re) formation: A service ecosystems view. *Service Science*, 4(3), 207-217.

- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004a). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 1–17.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004b). The four service marketing myths remnants of a goods-based, manufacturing model. *Journal of Service Research*, 6(4), 324–335.
- Vargo, S., R. F. Lusch. (2006). Service-Dominant Logic: What It Is, What It Is Not, What It Might Be. *The Service- Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions*, Robert F. Lusch and Stephen L. Vargo, Eds. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 43-56.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2007). Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 1–10. doi:10.1007/s11747-007-0069-6
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, r. F. (2008a). Service-dominant logic: Continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(Spring), 1–10.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, r. F. (2008b). Why service? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 25–38.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2011). It's all B2B... and beyond: Toward a systems perspective of the market. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40(2), 181-187.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2011b). Reducing the fear of crime in a community: A logic of systems & system of logics perspective. In *Proceedings of the Grand Challenge in Service Week: Understanding Complex Service Systems Through Different Lens*, Cambridge, UK.
- Vargo, S. L., Maglio, P. P., & Akaka, M. A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective. *European management journal*, 26(3), 145-152.
- Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. F. (2012). Special Issue: Toward a Better Understanding of the Role of Value in Markets and Marketing.
- Walras, L. (1954). *Elements of Pure Economics: or The Theory of Social Wealth*. W. Jaffe, trans.
- WHO (2002). *A policy Framework*, World Health Report, Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Wieland, H., Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2012). Toward a Service (Eco) Systems Perspective on Value Creation.
- Coulter, R. H., & Zaltman, G. (1995). Seeing the voice of the customer: Metaphor-based advertising research. *Journal of advertising research*, 35(4), 35.
- Zaltman, G. (1997). Rethinking market research: Putting people back in. *Journal of marketing Research*, 424-437.



APPENDIX

8.1. Appendix A- Request of image collection for the informants

Dear informants,

My name is Wang JiaKun. I am a master student from Tongji University, China. I am currently doing double-degree study in Aalto University, majored in International Design Business Management. For the purpose of my thesis' user research needs, I would like to interview you as a potential target consumer. My thesis research is collaborated with a local company - Active life village oy. ALV is aiming to promote an active lifestyle to the aging citizen.

In terms of active lifestyle, it could include a variety of different kinds of service that encourage the customer to live happy and healthy. 'Active' doesn't have to be energetic exercise, or necessarily health-related activities. We believe 'active' means one can hold the ability to achieve their 'goal' and be satisfied and enjoyed during the process.

For that matter, ALV would like to understand what is your ideal 'active' lifestyle in the near future. I will conduct an interview with you and hear your story.

In order to make the interview more efficient and effective, I would like to ask you to prepare 10 images that express your ideal active lifestyle from different perspectives and approaches of your life in the next 5 -10 years.

The interview will be conducted through a commonly used marketing research methods -Image probing. This method is widely used in branding and new product development projects. The interview will last about 2 hour or so. Upon your approval, there may be audio recordings during the interview. All information is only for analytical purposes of this study and will be kept highly confidential.

When you prepare the images for the interview, I would like you to follow this guideline:

(1) Please collect 10 pictures to represent "the ideal life style" you want to have in 5-10 years. You can use the Internet images, newspaper or magazine clippings, or your own photos. Each image should contain a story that carries your memories/wills/desires.

Please note:

This survey doesn't aim to collect a family album. Please avoid using too many personal photos that basically tell the same story. Please use your imagination and use images as a medium of aspirations of the 'active life' you want to live.

It is not a general reflection of the collective value of people with your age either. You collect this image in order to represent yourself only. It should be based on your own value and be really meaningful to you.

For example, you may select a piece of painting to describe ' the ideal lifestyle' you want in 5-10 years, if you are really moved by the content or the story of the painting, and see a connection between the painting and your life. This is the image you should collect.

(2) After you have collected 10 images, please contact me through email or cell phone. My email address is: tjhuki@gmail.com, and you can also reach me through this number: +358 442506466. Please also inform me a convenient time (and place) for us to conduct the interview. This interview is ideally conducted face-to-face (preferred) or through a telephone call.

(3) If the above description is not clear, you can contact me at any time.

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you!

Wang Jiakun | Aalto University International Design Business Management
Contact Phone: +358 442506466

8.2. Appendix B- Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informants



Figure 8.1 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant A (Source: the author)

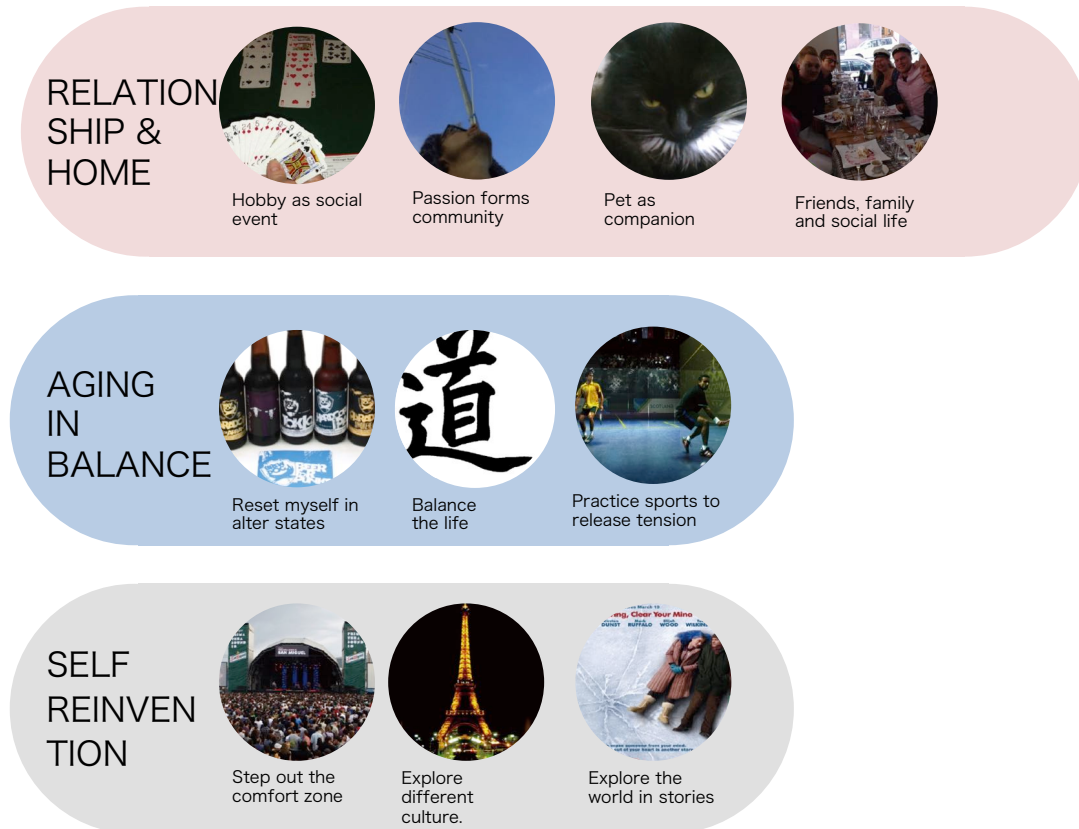


Figure 8.2 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant B (Source: the author)

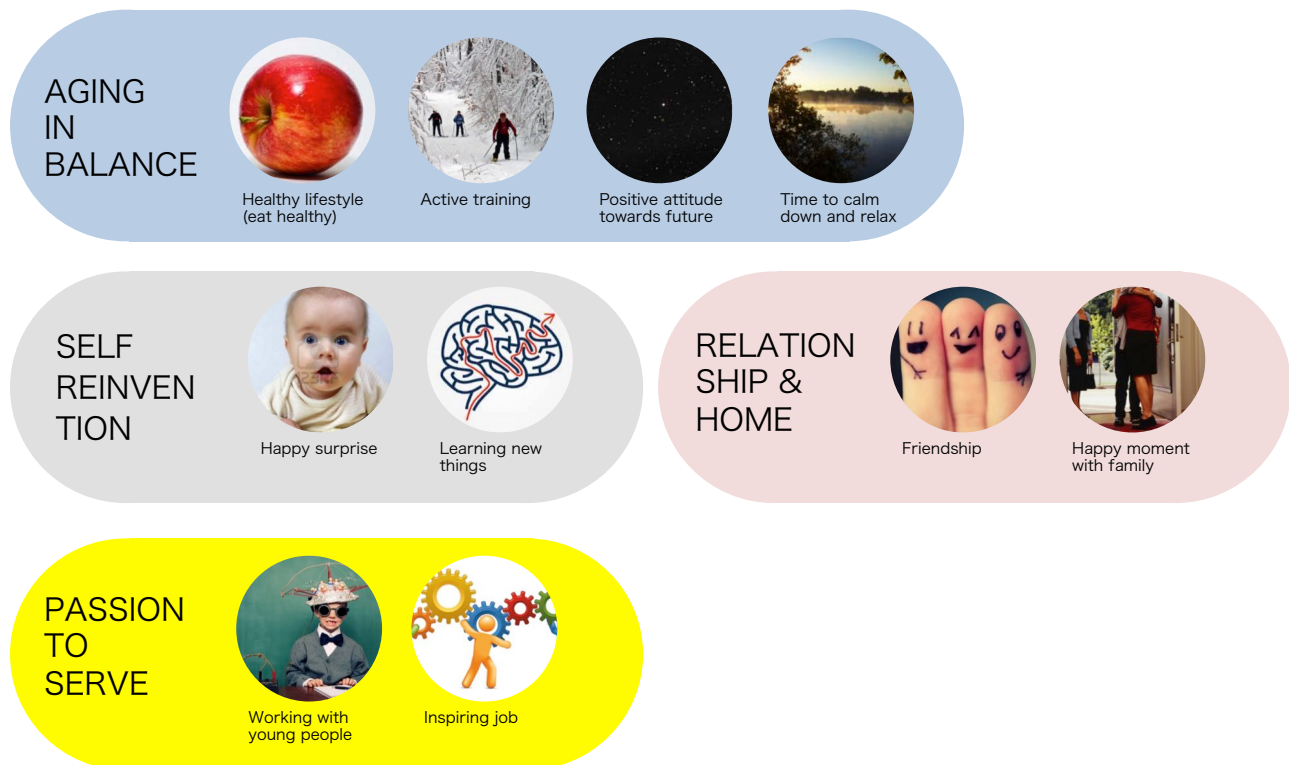


Figure 8.3 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant C (Source: the author)

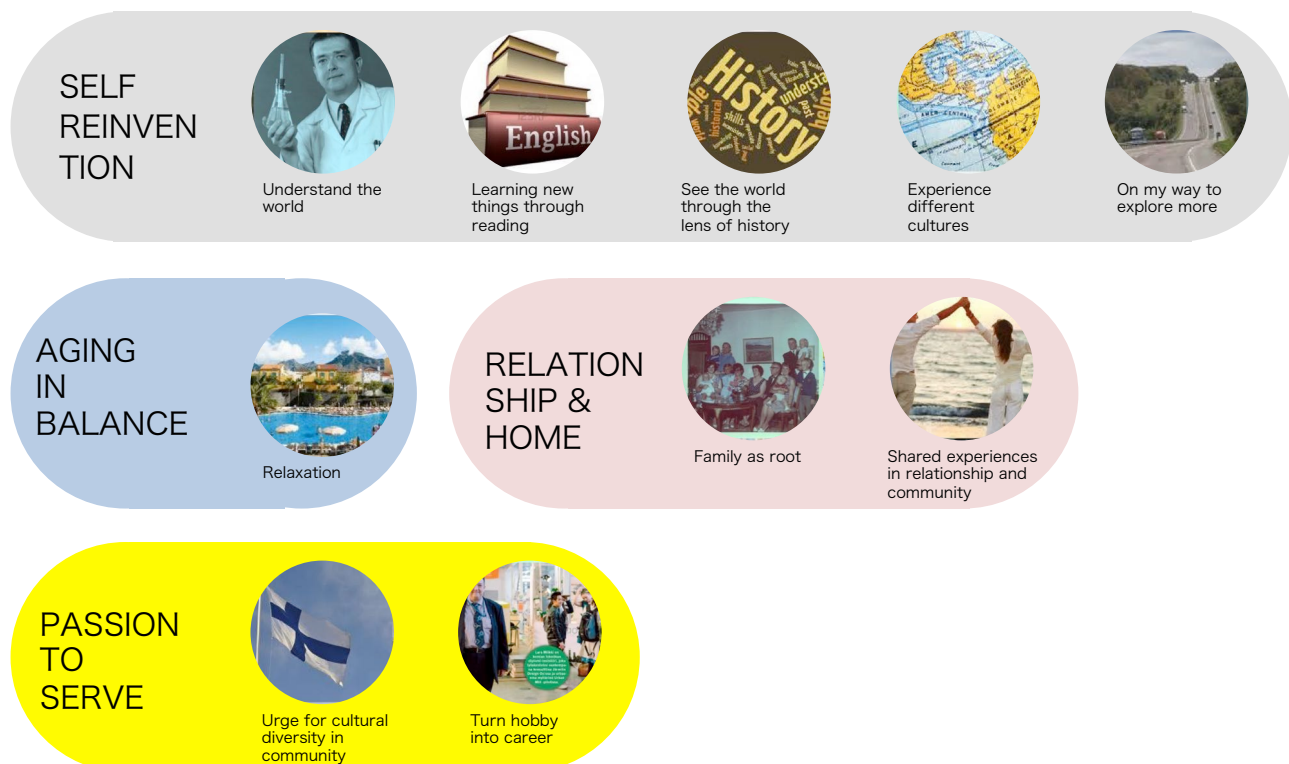


Figure 8.4 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant D (Source: the author)

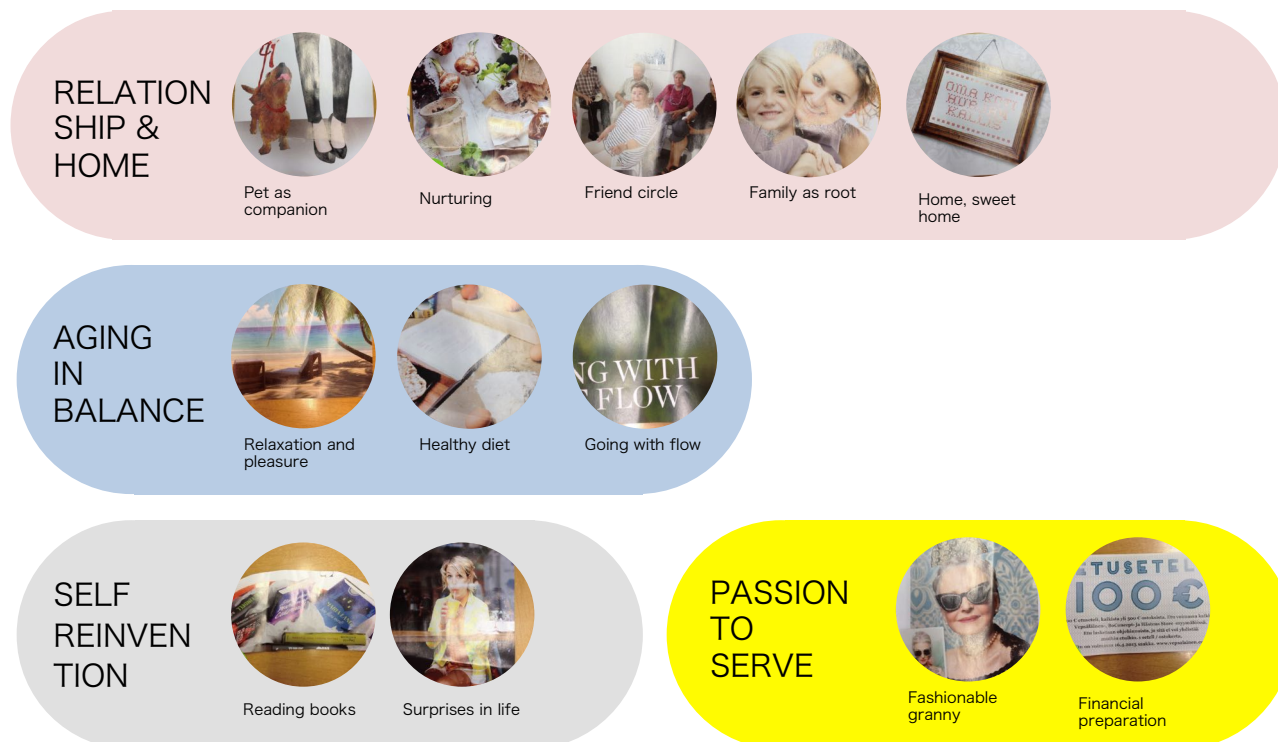


Figure 8.5 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant E (Source: the author)

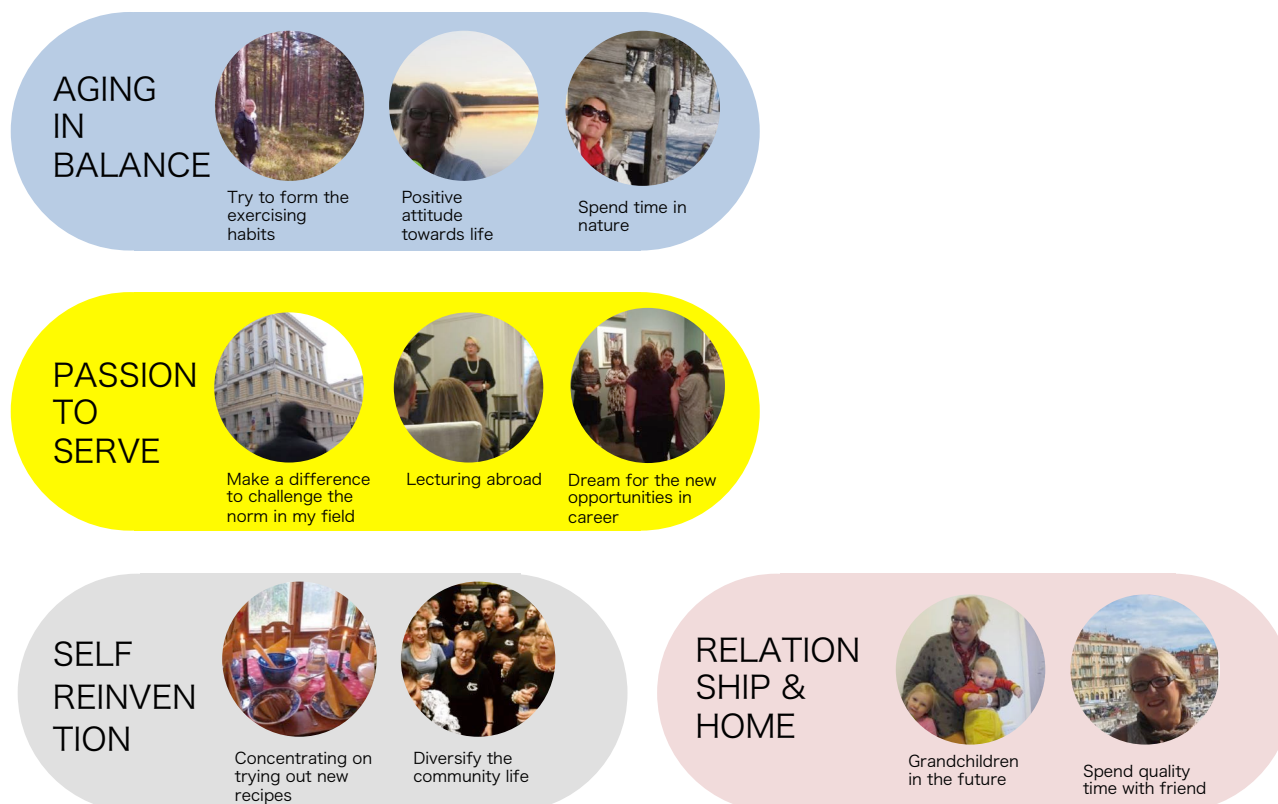


Figure 8.6 Clusters of Identity-building practices of Informant F (Source: the author)

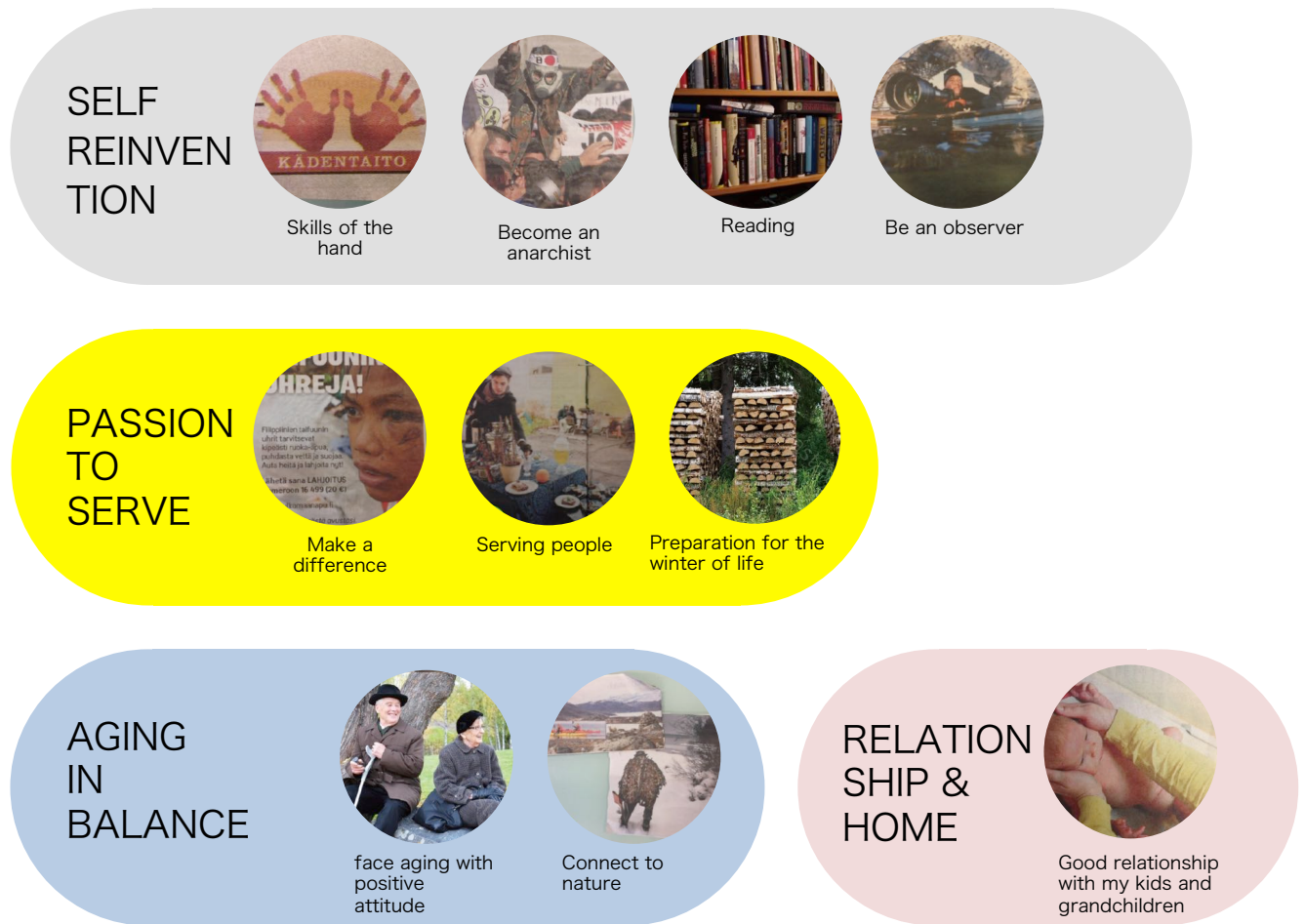


Figure 8.7 Clusters of Identity-building practices of informant G (Source: the author)